

Thousands attend funeral of Hamas militant

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Some 2,000 supporters of the Islamist group Hamas marched through Bethlehem Wednesday in the funeral of a Hamas member who blew himself up while preparing for an anti-Israeli attack. A heavy escort of Palestinian police followed the funeral march for Issa Khalil Shoka, as mourners chanted slogans in support of Ezzedine Al Qassab, Hamas' military wing to which Shoka belonged, an Agence France Presse correspondent said. Shoka died in an explosion Monday which tore apart his Bethlehem apartment when he apparently misfired explosives intended for use in an anti-Israeli attack, Palestinian sources said. Investigators were able to identify Shoka only from an identity card and receipts in his name found in the flat, which he had rented the day before the explosion, the sources said.

Jordan Times

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Palestinian teenager dies of army gunshot wounds

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A Palestinian teenager who was shot in the head earlier this week during a clash with Israeli troops died of his wounds Wednesday, Palestinian hospital officials said. The victim, 16-year-old Ashraf Nawadis, died at a hospital in the West Bank town of Ramallah. Nawadis and several other Palestinians had thrown stones at two Israeli border policemen in the town of Beit Sahour near Bethlehem Monday. The troops opened fire, wounding Nawadis. Nawadis' death brought to nine the number of Palestinians killed in clashes with Israeli troops since Israeli-Palestinian peace talks broke off in mid-March.

Egyptian policeman killed in militant ambush

MINYA, Egypt (AFP) — Islamist gunmen shot dead a police officer and wounded four of his men in an ambush in southern Egypt, security sources said Wednesday. The policemen were patrolling the road between Safi and Abu Qurgas in trouble-hit Minya province late Tuesday when their car came under fire from Muslim militants hiding by the roadside. The militants escaped after the attack and police launched a manhunt in the area, 260 kilometres south of Cairo. A total of 1,186 people have been killed since Islamists launched a violent campaign to topple Egypt's secular government in March 1992.

Guerrillas fire at Israelis in south Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (AP) — Guerrillas fired rockets and mortars at Israeli positions in southern Lebanon early Wednesday, security officials said. The Israeli army said explosions were heard in northern Israel, but added that there was no immediate evidence that guerrillas fired into northern Israel. Earlier Wednesday, Israeli army radio and Lebanese security officials said several shells had landed in northern Israel. Cross-border attacks from Lebanon into Israel have in the past provoked major Israeli retaliation. Lebanese security officials said 37 rockets were fired at the Israeli-occupied enclave in south Lebanon in the worst such attack in the south in 15 months. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Thousands of liquor bottles crushed in Arabian sand

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The arid Arabian sands were soaked with liquor as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) police used bulldozers to crush thousands of bottles of alcohol in a crackdown, newspapers reported Wednesday. The nearly 7,000 whisky and 1,500 beer bottles were ground into small pieces before they were embedded under the sand in the emirate of Sharjah Tuesday. Security sources said the alcohol was seized in a string of police raids over the past few months in a crackdown on illegal alcohol trade. Sharjah, the third biggest UAE emirate, banned alcohol 10 years ago. But in other parts of the UAE, non-Muslims have access to liquor at hotels and licensed shops.

General Assembly condemns Israel on settlement building

U.S., Israel and Micronesia vote against 131 other nations in 3rd condemnation

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — For the third time, the U.N. General Assembly voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to condemn Israel for a Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem but refrained from endorsing Arab calls for economic sanctions. Instead, the resolution urged member states to "discourage" activities that contribute to Israeli settlements. Most Asian countries supported the resolution, which Indonesia and Malaysia helped sponsor. Japan voted for it although Japanese Ambassador Hisashi Owada said Tokyo had some misgivings about parts of the text.

The resolution, introduced by Arab and Muslim countries, also recommends convening a conference to enforce international rules on protecting civilians in wartime as they pertain to Palestinians in Israeli-occupied territories. It stressed that member states should "fulfill in good faith their obligations" under the U.N. charter "to ensure their rights and benefits," which may be a veiled threat to curb Israel's U.N. membership.

The vote on the non-binding resolution was 131-3 with 14 abstentions. In April, a weaker resolution against the 6,500-unit Jewish settlement passed by a 134-3 vote with 11 abstentions. The U.S. has voted against the resolution each of the three times. Advocates of the resolution seek "to prove that no country is above international law," Palestinian delegate Nasser Al Kidwa said. "The time is approaching when Israel will have to decide whether it is a member of the family of nations or outside that family."

But Israel's new ambassador, Dore Gold, accused the Palestinians of reneging on their commitments under the peace process and denounced the United Nations for allegedly favouring the Arab side. "Let no member of this assembly delude themselves that this session will in any way advance prospects for peace in our region," Mr. Gold said. The resolution urges member states to "actively

(Continued on page 2)

Israel arrests fourth Palestinian police officer and demands fifth

NABLUS (AFP) — The Israeli army arrested a fourth Palestinian policeman in two days and demanded Wednesday the extradition of a fifth officer for alleged involvement in attacks on Jewish settlers. An army spokesman said Israel had asked the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to hand over Colonel Jihad Al Misami, the commander of three policemen who were arrested by Israeli troops Monday outside the West Bank town of Nablus. Israel said the three had been caught while planning an attack against the Israeli settlement of Brha on a mountain south of Nablus. Col. Misami is accused of ordering the attack, the spokesman said. Israel also suspects the same four policemen of involvement in a shooting in the same area last week on an Israeli vehicle, the spokesman said.

Col. Misami denied to AFP that he had ordered anti-settler attacks. The Palestinian police have denied that the three officers were planning an attack on the settlement, saying they were wrongfully arrested by Israeli troops 1.6 kilometres away from Brha while on an anti-drug operation. Meanwhile, Israeli troops also arrested the deputy head of police in the self-rule area of Tulkarem, Colonel Mumar Aboushi, at a special roadblock set up to catch him late Tuesday, Palestinian and Israeli sources said. The Israeli army spokesman said Col. Aboushi was arrested in connection with the other three policemen in Nablus and was suspected of involvement in attacks near Tulkarem. Col. Aboushi was in a car with Ramadan Al Batta, the

deputy governor of another self-rule town, Jenin, en route to Tulkarem when "they were stopped at an Israeli checkpoint set up especially for them," the head of Palestinian police, General Ghazi Al Jibali, told Agence France Presse. Soldiers at the checkpoint forced Col. Aboushi and Mr. Batta out of the car, frisked them, handcuffed their wrists behind their backs and blindfolded them, a Palestinian official who was also in the car told AFP. Mr. Batta was then released while Col. Aboushi was taken into custody, said the official, who asked not to be identified. "These methods are unacceptable. I don't understand what Israel means by doing all this, which is in violation of all our agreements. We have made several protests about these incidents," said Gen. Jibali.

Law enforcing raising Israel's flag angers Arabs, some Jews


TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Arabs, liberals and ultra-Orthodox Jews Wednesday united in protest against a new law forcing all state-run schools to fly an Israeli flag. The law, which passed a third and final reading in the

Knesset by a 39-17 vote Tuesday, could exacerbate tensions between secular and religious Jews and between Jews and Muslims in Israel. Both the ruling Likud and main opposition Labour Party supported it.

Almost a fifth of Israel's 5.8 million citizens are Arabs. More than a half million are ultra-Orthodox, some of whom have traditionally opposed the creation of a secular state in Israel.

"Woe to the flag that is waved only by law," said Taleb Sana, a lawmaker from the Arab Democratic party. He said Israeli Arabs could not identify with Israel's flag because it bears only Jewish symbols like the six-pointed Star of David. He suggested it be modified by adding the Islamic Crescent and the Christian Cross or replacing the Star of David with a dove holding an olive branch. Mr. Sana said few Israeli Arab schools fly the flag already, and even these would probably now lower it to protest the law. Moshe Gafni, of the ultra-Orthodox party United Torah Judaism (UTJ), said he was against any "coercion" involving flags. Moshe Eilat, another official from the UTJ, explained that some religious Jews "see this flag as the Zionist flag and they don't consider themselves Zionists." The liberal Meretz Party, which also opposed the law, found itself in rare agreement with the UTJ.

On the Occasion of
The Prophet's Birthday



ARAB BANK

is honoured to convey to
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and to
the Arab & Islamic Nations

Its felicitations and best wishes

4 Palestinian detainees in ninth day of hunger strike

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Four Palestinian Islamists imprisoned without charge by Israel for more than a year have begun on hunger strike for the past nine days demanding their release, a prisoners' rights group said Wednesday. The four administrative detainees, all members of the Islamist Hamas began their hunger strike, July 7 in the Damon prison in northern Israel, said Khaleda Jarar, executive director of Al Damir group. "They are in stable condition but prison authorities are completely ignoring them and are not giving them any treatment," Ms. Jarar told AFP. "They have declared an open-ended strike and have said they will not end it until they are either charged with a crime and tried or released," she said. A lawyer from Al Damir, a Palestinian rights group, visited the four Tuesday.

Algeria FIS chief says freedom unconditional

LONDON (R) — Islamist leader Abassi Madani was quoted Wednesday as saying that Algerian authorities had freed him unconditionally and without his making any promises. The London-based Al Hayat newspaper said Mr. Madani, head of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), told a senior member in Brussels by telephone: "My release was not part of any deal... I went out [of jail] without any conditions and I did not sign any pledge."



Abassi Madani (with beard), leader of the outlawed Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) gestures on his way to the 'Kabul' mosque accompanied by residents of the Belcourt neighborhood, in Algiers, Tuesday (AFP photo)

Al Hayat also quotes unnamed FIS sources as saying Mr. Madani's release was a fine initiative by President Liamine Zeroual "but it's not enough to lead FIS to ask its fighters to cease fire." According to the newspaper, Mr. Madani went to his home in Algiers to be with family members. He was

also visited by provisional FIS leader Abdul Qader Hashani, who had spent five years in detention and released earlier this month. Mr. Hashani was sentenced to five years imprisonment on charges of undermining the state but freed as he had already spent this time in detention.

U.S. administration tries to stop trade ban on Syria

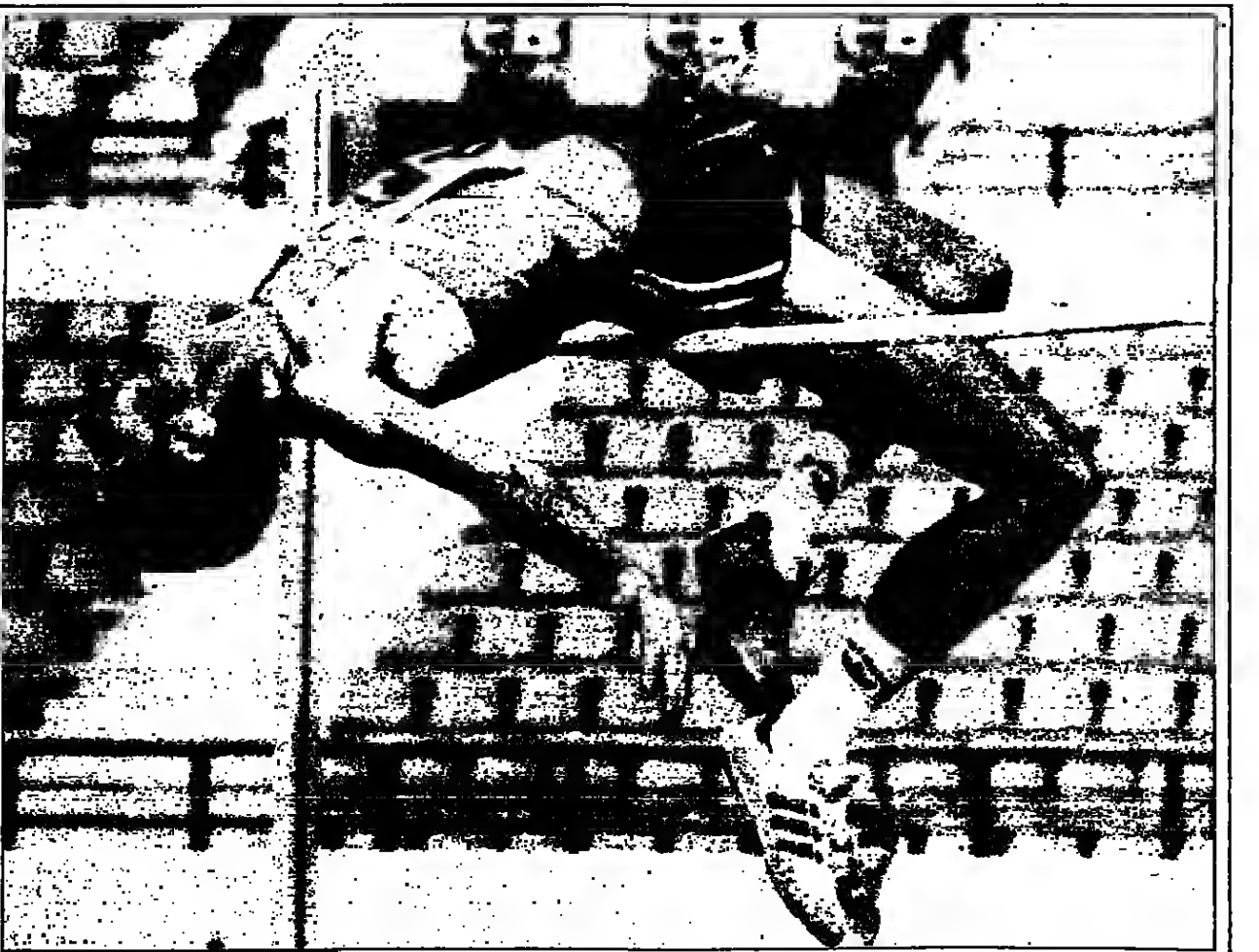
By Lamis Andoni
Special to the Jordan Times

BOSTON — The State Department is trying to prevent a congressional ban on trade with Syria as part of a bill against countries accused of sponsoring terrorism. If passed, the bill will undermine American efforts to keep an all-piercing peace process from total collapse. Administration officials told the Jordan Times that Syria should be dealt with "differently" than other alleged "sponsors of terrorism" since it has taken part in the American-led peace process launched in Madrid in 1991. "We are working on the issue," said one well-placed administration source, adding that Washington has been in touch with the Syrian government to placate Syrian concerns and coordinate

efforts to talk to the Congress and the Senate into making exceptions for Damascus. But Arab-American organisations, that have started a campaign against the proposed bill, believe that the administration is not doing enough. "The American administration is as weak as usual," said Khalil Jahshan, president of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA). The NAAA and the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) have started a joint lobbying campaign to prevent the Senate and Congress from passing a bill that will effectively sever financial transactions with Syria. "We want the administration to take a more balanced position that will not weaken the president's hands in conducting foreign policy," said ADC

President Hala Maksoud. In a recent joint statement, the NAAA and ADC urged the Arab-American community to send letters to the administration, the Senate and the Congress in protest against the proposed trade prohibition. "...It (the bill) abrogates the president's authority to conduct foreign policy and undermines his efforts to move the peace process forward. It will deprive the U.S. from potential markets in the future, even trade between the two countries is at present limited," the statement said. Analysts believe that U.S. companies have more to lose from a trade ban with Syria since the latter is a considerable market for U.S. goods. On Monday, NAAA officials met with representatives of American

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ANOTHER GOLD MEDAL FOR JORDAN: Fakhreddine Ghour passes the high jump bar to grab the gold medal for Jordan at the Arab Games in Beirut, Wednesday (see story on page 10) (Reuters photo)

Arabs seek to delay MENA summit until June — paper

RIYADH (AFP) — Arab countries are seeking to have the Middle East economic summit set for November in Doha postponed until June 1998, a Saudi newspaper reported Wednesday.

Al Sharq Al Awsat, quoting Arab diplomats, said Egypt was "leading contacts to propose the delay to Qatar."

The proposal will be put to Arab League foreign ministers who are due to meet in Cairo in September. For the delay to be announced in the name of the organisation, said the newspaper.

Qatar has said only an Arab League boycott can stop the Nov. 16-18 summit it plans to host with Israel's participation over the protests of several Arab states, notably Syria.

"The threats against Qatar and all the racket can only strengthen its determination to organise the conference because Qatar does not accept threats from anyone," Foreign Minister Hamad Ben Jassem Al Thani said Monday.

But "if the Arab World, in the framework of the Arab League, adopts a united stand to boycott the conference, then we can talk about it," Sheikh Hamad said. Syria has lobbied hard for the conference to be scrapped and won the backing of Saudi Arabia.



MANAGED TO SLIP UNSCATHED: Kuwaiti Finance Minister Nasser Al Rodhan (left) is congratulated by supporters, Tuesday in Kuwait City, after he faced a marathon grilling by MPs fending off allegations of negligence in office and mismanagement of public funds (AFP photo)

Palestinian official meets white Russians over monastery dispute

GAZA CITY (AFP) — A top Palestinian official met Wednesday with a delegation from the White Russian Orthodox Church in a bid to end a dispute with their "red" rivals over a West Bank monastery.

International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath met a delegation from the U.S.-based church led by Father Victor Potapov, which met earlier with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, the official news agency Wafa reported.

Mr. Shaath told Wafa the talks aimed "to find a solution to the problem" over the Abraham's Oak Monastery in Hebron.

Palestinian police evicted the White Russian monks and nuns who lived in the monastery and handed the

building over to its rival Moscow-based Russian Orthodox Church, July 5.

The "white" and "red" factions of the church have been in conflict since the 1917 Communist revolution in Russia, and for many years the Moscow patriarchate has been demanding the return of all its property in the holy land.

"We want a solution which does not alter the current situation [in which the Moscow patriarchy controls the monastery] but which allows all groups to use this monastery," Mr. Shaath said.

Mr. Shaath said Father Potapov had given him a written apology for an incident in June in which White Russian monks

barred the Moscow Patriarch Alexei II from entering the monastery. Father Potapov asked Mr. Arafat in their meeting over the weekend to return the monastery to the White Russian Orthodox Church.

Mr. Arafat promised to find a solution to the dispute which "respects the rights of everyone," said his adviser on Christian affairs, Ibrahim Qandalaft.

The U.S.-based church claims to own the monastery and its monks and nuns have lived there since 1917, but the Moscow patriarchate claims to have the actual deeds to the property. Mr. Qandalaft said.

Israeli, Palestinian ministers to attempt a jump-start of peace

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai was to meet Palestinian International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath late Wednesday in a bid to create some progress in the stalled peace process, Palestinian sources said.

Mr. Mordechai and Mr. Shaath were to meet at the Tel Aviv home of the Egyptian ambassador to Israel, Mohamed Bassiouni, where they held a similar meeting a week ago, the sources said.

An Israeli government spokesman said the meeting was "probable."

The sources said the two ministers would follow up results of a new track in talks between the two sides set up by American and Egyptian mediation efforts to get around the four-month

deadlock in the peace process.

Mr. Shaath told the Palestinian daily Al Ayyam that it was "very reasonable" to give the Egyptian mediation bid until the end of July to make some progress.

"We don't want the issue to take a long time. This is the last chance and if there is no progress it will be a great setback," he said.

As a result of the first Shaath-Mordechai meeting, Israeli-Palestinian committees held a session of talks Sunday night on the long-delayed opening of Palestinian air and sea ports, which Israel has refused to grant permission to start operations.

The head Palestinian negotiator on the airport, Fayez Zaidan, said the two sides made some "small progress" in that session, with

agreements on technical issues and on Palestinian administration of parts of the facility.

But there remain differences over security issues, he said, without providing details.

The Shaath-Mordechai talks were also to concentrate on other commitments under self-rule agreements which Israel has failed to implement, including the creation of a "safe passage" land link between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

They are the first talks on substantial issues since the Palestinians walked out of negotiations in mid-March to protest Israel's ground-breaking of a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

"That led to the longest ever halt in the peace process, as the Palestinians refused to return to talks until Israel

stopped all settlement building in the West Bank and Arab east Jerusalem, a condition which Israel refused.

Palestinian negotiator Hassan Asfour said the new track of talks came from an Egyptian-American initiative "in order to prevent a political vacuum which could lead to an explosion."

"Our continuation in the talks is dependant on the seriousness of what it achieves on the ground," he told Agence France Presse.

Mr. Asfour underlined that the talks are dealing only with issues Israel was due to have implemented already. "But at the same time, we insist the factors which caused the crisis must be addressed," he said.

Rise in Nile water level

KHARTOUM (AFP) — There has been a rise in the level of the Blue Nile and the main river Nile, that starts from Khartoum and flows northwards, compared to the record level of 1988, a Khartoum daily reported Wednesday.

The Al Rai Al Akher daily said the rise, however, was lower than the level registered on the same day last year.

It said the volume of the Blue Nile at Al Roseiris dam, in central Sudan, Tuesday reached 238 million cubic metres, more than on the same day in 1988 by 12 million cubic metres, while the level at Khartoum was 13.48 metres, more than that of 1988 by 68 centimetres.

The main river Nile at Dongola, north Sudan, Tuesday reached a level of 11.16 metres compared to 10.39 metres on the corresponding day in 1988, the paper said.

Meanwhile, the Civil Defence Department has instructed authorities in the states to form local committees to take precautionary measures against expectations of an overflow of the Nile and of the rains which, according to the meteorological department, are expected to be heavy this year.

Kuwaiti woman tries to blame Iraq for son's death

CAIRO (AFP) — A Kuwaiti woman who panicked when she found her four-year-old son drowned in a Cairo hotel bath tried to pin the blame on the Iraqi secret services, police said Wednesday.

Nimat Abdullahi, 43, was taking an afternoon nap in her hotel room Tuesday when her son Badr Zawawi drowned in the bath, the head of south Cairo police Ahmad Hamam Attiya told reporters.

In a panic, she scrawled a bogus claim of responsibility on the wall saying: "Iraqi letter to [emir] Jaber of Kuwait. Tomorrow someone else in another hotel."

After making her two daughters, Sheikhah, 13, and Shahida, 11, swear to secrecy, she told police that an Iraqi climbed into the hotel room through the window, undressed her son and drowned him in the bath.

"She feared police would accuse her of negligence and throw her in prison. She was also scared of being rejected by her husband because it was her only son," General Attiya explained.

However her story failed to impress police who discovered no sign of a break in, no suspicious finger prints and no trace of violence on the boy's body.

Ten hours later she confessed and the pathologist declared a case of accidental death. The mother was released in a "profoundly depressed state," Gen. Attiya said, adding that no charges would be brought against her.

General Assembly condemns Israel on settlement building

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discourage activities which directly contribute to any construction or development of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

The first draft recommended a ban on importing goods produced in disputed areas, including Jerusalem. But the sponsors removed that from the final draft in hopes of winning more support. Instead, the resolution demanded that Israel identify goods produced in those areas.

U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson said such measures "amount to a demand for a partial economic boycott of Israel" and run "contrary to a basic building block of the peace process — the pledges of the negotiating parties to build economic ties as a means of advancing the process."

In March, the U.S. used its Security Council veto twice to block resolutions against the project. After those vetoes, the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to condemn the project.

Last month, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the Jewish settlement poses a serious threat to Arab-Israeli peacekeeping. In a report, Mr. Annan said the Jewish settlement "is seen as the final step toward the isolation of Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank."

He said the project was widely interpreted to be part of Israel's plan "of fully incorporating Arab east Jerusalem as part of the 'unified, eternal capital of the state of Israel'."

Mr. Gold denounced the U.N. report as "hostile and one-sided" and complained that it was based on information from U.N. agencies that are supposed to be performing humanitarian work.

Israelis and the Palestinians broke off relations in March and have not resumed them, chiefly because of the Jewish settlement.

U.S. administration tries to stop trade ban on Syria

(Continued from page 1)

companies who trade with Syria to coordinate efforts in order to block the trade ban.

The proposed bill is based on two legislations already passed by the Senate and Congress that restrict all financial transactions and assistance to countries accused of "sponsoring terrorism."

Although Syria is not mentioned by name, proponents of the bill have repeatedly mentioned Syria by name in their presentations and at congressional hearings.

The U.S. has not removed Syria's name from the list of states "sponsoring terrorism" and pro-Israel congressmen and senators have

been openly calling for pressure on Syria to stop supporting Palestinian groups, who oppose the Oslo accords and the Lebanese Hizbollah movement.

The two separate legislations are sponsored by two outspoken supporters of the Israeli government. Senator John Ashcroft and Congressman Bill McCollum, of the Republican Party, have sponsored or actively supported bills to halt financial aid to the Palestinian National Authority for failure "to combat terrorism."

According to Arab-American organisation officials, the State Department is opposed to beginning financial transactions with Syria because it will under-

cut its efforts to get Damascus back to the negotiating table.

Section 1605 of what is called the "State Department Bill" prohibits all financial transactions with Syria except those relating "to humanitarian assistance, diplomatic relations and national security." The Congress legislation is slightly less restrictive than that of the Senate but the two houses are expected to come out with a unified bill soon.

According to other informed sources, supporters of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are behind the move to justify Israeli refusal to compromise on the Syrian Golan Heights or to seize

its occupation of southern Lebanon.

Syria has accused the Israeli right-wing government of reneging on an agreement between Syrian negotiators and the former Labour government that called for an Israeli withdrawal from the strategic Golan Heights.

But the Likud government has announced that it was not ready to pull out from the Golan Heights and demanded an end to Syrian support of Hizbollah and that Syria withdraws its troops from Lebanon.

Analysts believe that even though the American administration is interested in practising some pressure on Syria, especially after signs of recent Iraqi-Syrian reconciliation, it thinks that a trade ban is an extreme step that could contribute to destabilising the region.

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:35French Programmes
16:05He Shoots He Scores
16:30He Shoots He Scores
17:15Varieties
18:10French Programmes
19:00News in French
19:30News Headline
19:35Cinema, Cinema
20:00World Echo
20:30Documentary — Submarines
21:10Kung Fu
22:00News in English
22:30Feature film
23:59Tarzatat

PRAYER TIMES

04:04Fajr
05:36(Sunrise) Doha
12:42Dhuhr
16:22Asr
19:47Maghreb
21:19Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Armenian Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Mild weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at low altitudes and winds north-westerly moderate to active. On Friday, temperatures are expected to rise slightly. In Aqaba,

winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.
Mini/Max. Temperatures
Amman18/29
Aqaba25/38
Deserts17/33
Jordan Valley24/37

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 28, Aqaba 37 Humidity readings: Amman 45 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadshah759200
Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi894788
Dr. Salim Daboubi776751
Dr. Khalid Abdo657139
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdous pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy64945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484
Al Quds pharmacy61101

ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi989601
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs661101
Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre813813/32
Khalidi Maternity644281/6
Akileh Maternity642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612637
Al-Ahli, Abdali6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3
Al-Bashir775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital60234050
Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital09983323
Zarqa National Hospital09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital09986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital09990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital02725555
Greek Catholic Hospital02727275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital02747100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital03314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:45Beirut (RJ)
07:20Moscow (RJ)
09:10Kuwait (RJ)
11:35Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
11:55Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:10Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:15Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:20Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
13:00Doha (RJ)
13:10Paris (RJ)
13:20Athens (RJ)
13:25London (RJ)
21:10Cairo (RJ)
21:20Lansan (RJ)
21:25Jeddah (RJ)
22:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:25Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights

04:00Athens (OA)
06:15Istanbul (TK)
08:45Beirut (ME)
08:50Amsterdam (GB)
09:10London (BA)
14:30Riyadh (SV)
14:45Bahrain, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:30Annaba (Algeria) (AH)
17:00Rome (AZ)
21:00Tel Aviv (LY)
21:10Beirut (ME)
01:20Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
05:40London (BA)
09:00Dubai (EK)

DEPARTURES

04:00Athens (OA)
06:15Istanbul (TK)
08:45Beirut (ME)
08:50Amsterdam (GB)
09:10London (BA)
14:30Riyadh (SV)
14:45Bahrain, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:30Annaba (Algeria) (AH)
17:00Rome (AZ)
21:00Tel Aviv (LY)
21:10Beirut (ME)
01:20Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
05:40London (BA)
09:00Dubai (EK)

Home N

Speaker call

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Europe
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Speaker calls on Europe to help succour peace process

VIENNA (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Srour, currently leading a Jordanian parliamentary delegation on a visit to Austria, Wednesday called on Europe and the global community to help end the present deadlock in the Middle East peace process.

During a meeting with the chairman and members of a political affairs committee at the Austrian parliament, Mr. Srour attributed the impasse to Israeli Jewish settlement policies in the occupied territories as well as that country's failure to honour the stipulations of both the peace process and peace accords.

Mr. Srour stated that the Kingdom's peace endeavours require support from

Europe. Jordan continues to bear the heaviest burdens resulting from decades of conflict in the Middle East, he added.

The question of peace in the Middle East continues to rivet the global community's attention as the region has witnessed long years of strife, Mr. Srour stated.

This has prevented the people of the region from pursuing adequate reconstruction and development, he maintained.

International terrorism was a topic of discussion at the meeting and Mr. Srour requested that Europe differentiate between acts of terrorism and freedom struggles.

Islam has been misjudged by some Western

nations which have linked the religion to terrorist acts, he stated.

Islam is a religion of tolerance which propagates peace and is wholly unfiliated with violence or acts of terrorism, the speaker said.

The Austrian parliamentarians voiced their country's support for the peace process and Jordan's efforts therein.

They pledged all possible assistance to Jordan and the peace process, through the European Union, and described the Jordanian parliamentary visit as a good opportunity for the two sides to exchange views in regards to parliamentary cooperation and in addressing regional issues.



Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi Wednesday addresses Jordan News Agency, Petra. Also pictured are Secretary General of the Ministry of State for Information Affairs Nawaf Mawla, Director of the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Abdullah Etoun and Director General of the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation Hissab Kamzi (Petra photo).

Mutawi addresses news agency

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi Wednesday described the government as concerned with the development of the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The administration will continue to provide the agency with qualified cadres and sophisticated equipment to help promote its services, he added.

During a visit to the agency, currently celebrating its 28th anniversary, Dr. Mutawi affirmed the government's readiness to help

the news agency earn sufficient funds to cover its expenses and assume a leading status among news agencies in the Arab World.

The minister conveyed the government's appreciation of achievements accomplished over the past three years to Petra Director Abdullah Etoun and his staff.

According to Mr. Etoun, the agency has linked out the Internet and introduced an advanced computerised archives system over the last three years.

Also Wednesday, Dr.

Mutawi and European Journalism's Med-Media Training Programme Director Tudor Lomas discussed Jordanian-European Union cooperation in training journalists.

Since the Med-Media programme moved to Amman last year it has conducted eight training courses and workshops four of which were held in Jordan, Mr. Lomas said.

The programme has planned 12 more media courses and other activities for the coming year, he added.

Premier enters into dialogue with JUDP regarding upcoming elections

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali yesterday met with a delegation from the leftist Jordanian Unionist Democratic Party (JUDP) to discuss "guarantees which the government can offer to ensure transparency" in the upcoming general elections, a JUDP delegation member stated.

The meeting was the first between the government and an opposition party since last week's Muslim Brotherhood decision not to participate in the 1997 elections which sparked a debate within opposition groups and professional associations as to whether to call for a general boycott thereof.

"Until now, it has been a dialogue between the deaf; this meeting has opened the door for real dialogue," JUDP Deputy Secretary General Jamil Nimri commented.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Majali reaffirmed the government's readiness to open a dialogue with groups from the entire political spectrum and invited all parties to present their election ideas and proposals.

"This meeting should pave the way for future dialogue between the government and parties," the premier was quoted as saying.

Describing the discussion as "frank," JUDP President Musa Ma'aitah joined the premier in a call for political groups to "respond positively to the government's invitation to open dia-

logue."

In a Tuesday interview with the Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), Dr. Majali reiterated the government's determination to hold parliamentary elections, due in November, regardless of the

laws as unconstitutional. How can they ask the government to simultaneously introduce new provisional laws to cancel old provisional laws? Are there right and wrong provisional laws?" Dr. Majali asked.

autumn's elections will be free and democratic," he said, adding that "a final decision in favour of a general boycott would be detrimental to the development of democracy."

Transparent voter registration procedures, clear mechanisms for voters' transfer from one district to another, and the presence of candidate and party representatives in voting areas are among the JUDP's requests to the government, the source said.

Queried as to the possibility that those other opposition groups, who called for a meeting on Monday to unify their stand regarding the elections, might label the JUDP social-democrats as the "weak ring of the chain," in their argument with the government, the source admitted the JUDP has "considered such possibility and accepted it."

"If the government says it is ready to open a dialogue, the only way to disprove its declarations of good intentions is to accept the invitation and actually engage [the government] in dialogue," he said.

The JUDP had requested a meeting with the prime minister two weeks ago, "to sound the alarm and warn against the danger of an increasing general loss of confidence in [public] institutions," according to a JUDP statement.

The JUDP delegation to the talks with the prime minister was led by Issa Madanat, and included, together with Messrs. Ma'aitah and Nimri, Deputy Bassam Haddadin and former minister, Mustafa Shneikat.

'Professional associations to boycott elections' — Shbeilat

AMMAN — Opposition leader Leith Shbeilat yesterday asserted "professional associations will decide to boycott the elections," and added that a general meeting of all association higher cadres is expected to convene soon.

"Only a few individuals oppose the boycott, and that for egoistic reasons, but 'the street' supports it," he added.

Commenting on Wednesday's Muslim Brotherhood decision, he stated "that this movement, which has always been docile, has called for a boycott, gives a measure of how deep the crisis is."

"The government is deliberately turning its back to the people's demands and a boycott is the only way to amend the system," he concluded.

Heads of the Jordan Bar Association and Jordan Dentists' Association Hussein Mjalli and Sa'id Abu Maizar also expressed their support for the boycott, in separate interviews with local and international news agencies Tuesday (F.C.)

"We cannot confuse guarantees for transparent and fair elections with previously-established political decisions," a JUDP member of the delegation, who requested anonymity, told the Jordan Times.

Accusing other opposition groups of "using the boycott for propaganda purposes" and "demagoguery," he added that the JUDP interpreted the call for a boycott as a "tactical decision, and not a strategic option."

"We want to open a dialogue and obtain guarantees that this

general decision to call for a general boycott, but he also confirmed his availability to open a dialogue with the Brotherhood.

However, Dr. Majali maintained that "the Brotherhood was originally established as a religious organisation and not to play a political role." He criticised the Brotherhood's request to abolish recent amendments to press and election regulations, introduced through temporary laws.

"They (the Muslim Brotherhood) are describing provisional

Petra National Trust enters into conservation agreement

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Petra National Trust (PNT) entered into an agreement for the "conservation of the bottom of the Siq and the Conservation of the Siq Area in Petra" with the Jordanian-Swiss Bilateral Committee this week, according to a Petra National Trust statement.

Funds for this project were allocated through an agreement between the Swiss Confederation and Jordan to reduce the latter's external debts and create a Counterpart Fund.

Fifteen per cent of this Counterpart Fund is earmarked for cultural development related to tourism promotion and preservation of the heritage, environment and antiquities in the Petra Region, the statement said.

The project aims to implement recommendations made in two

extensive surveys on Nabataean hydraulic systems and the consolidation of the Siq.

These were conducted in 1996 under a separate agreement with the Jordanian-Swiss Bilateral Committee.

The total cost of the project is JD 470,000 and work in the Siq will commence July 22, according to the statement.

The short-term objectives of the project include:

- Exposure of the original pavement of the Siq.
- Reclamation of the original slope of the Siq.
- Consolidation of the bottom of the Siq.
- Restoration of selected components of the hydraulic systems flanking the Siq.

The long-term objectives of the project include:

• Completion of the restoration of the Nabataean hydraulic systems flanking the Siq.

• Protection of the Siq from flash floods.

• Restoration of the Nabataean gardens to provide tourists and academic missions alternative sites to visit and study.

• Revival of the natural flora to the areas under study.

• Water harvesting for use in the Petra area.

• Exposure of another facet of Nabataean culture and heritage.

The project will last 12 months and be executed by the PNT in coordination with the Department of Antiquities, the Petra Regional Council and a joint venture between Middle East Engineering Management, a Jordanian firm, and Intermonument,

a Swiss restoration firm, the statement said.

The Petra National Trust is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) whose mandate is the preservation of the antiquities, cultural heritage and environment of the Petra region.

It was established in 1989 to unite residents of Jordan with persons abroad who are committed to a collective international effort to safeguard Petra, a World Heritage Site.

Her Majesty Queen Noor is the honorary chairperson of the Trust and HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid presides over the board.

Funds for the Trust's activities are obtained through members, donor governments, and local and international agencies as well as individual contributions, the statement concluded.

Children's congress emphasises role of various media as route to better understanding

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Joining children and cultures from twelve Arab countries is the main theme of the 17th Arab Children's Congress to be held from July 19-29 at the Roman Amphitheatre.

This year's congress, entitled "Challenges and Ambitions of Future Arab Generations," is comprised of 12 Arab countries including two boys and two girls each. Congress Director Lina Tal explained.

A rich programme of activities has been organised by specialists in the field of education, culture and art, according to Press Officer at Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) Ruba Jaradat.

The programme, held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, will include an opening ceremony with a performance of the musical "Assawsana," accompanied by folkloric music and poetry from each participating country, Ms. Jaradat affirmed.

Brainstorming sessions with media specialists, such as Dr. Omar Khatib, will involve the children in discussions covering previous challenges which faced earlier generations regarding social and economic development, the role of the media in promoting Arabic culture and how those challenges were successfully met, Ms. Tal concurred.

The children will then compare those challenges with problems currently facing the younger generation and discuss the role that Arab children can play, with the help of the media, to promote cross-cultural understanding, she added.

By this, the true image of Arab culture and

identity, often misrepresented by foreign media, can be rectified, she explained.

A series of drama and art workshops working under the congress' theme will be held for the children and culminate in theatre performances, Ms. Tal stated.

These are to be presented at the closing ceremony, attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor, she said.

Congress recommendations, certificate and gift distributions will also be presented, according to Ms. Tal.

During the art workshops, participating children, whose ages range between 13-14 years, will produce models constructed of paper and cardboard as well as masks to be used in the play, Ms. Jaradat stated.

"They will also bring articles, stories and research papers to be shared during group discussions," she added.

The young participants will then visit important archaeological sites and cultural centres in the Kingdom, such as Petra and Um Qais, Ms. Jaradat explained.

During the Arab Night Function, all children will share the opportunity to perform a folkloric piece representing their country and culture, she stated.

The annual Arab Children's Congress was initiated by the Queen, following the 1980 Arab Summit Conference in Amman, as a means of uniting children from throughout the Arab World.

The objectives of the 17th Arab Children's Congress include uniting Arabs to promote dialogue and exchange ideas in order to forge bonds of friendship while fostering activities, reflection and action in favour of peace, cross-cultural understanding, solidari-

ty and tolerance, Ms. Tal said.

The main goal of the congress is to launch an educational process, consisting of consciousness-raising on youth-related issues as we approach the 21st century, Ms. Jaradat affirmed.

We will also cover sustainable development to allow children to undertake specific actions in their own societies as well as the rest of the world, she added.

Other objectives include highlighting common problems facing Arab youth, promoting children's talents in artistic and cultural fields and providing future decision-makers to the Arab World, according to Ms. Jaradat.

The recommendations and aspirations of the Arab children will be the main focus, she stated.

The congress is a unique cultural event which encourages children to learn and interact with others, Executive Director of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation Yaser Tal affirmed.

All activities will be documented by young journalists and filmed so that a 15-minute documentary might be produced and shared.

The NHF will also produce a third edition of the magazine, Arab Children, containing articles, stories, art and plays produced by the children as well as the recommendations of the congress to be later distributed to all Arab countries, according to Ms. Jaradat.

The congress will have full media coverage through local and international companies, she concluded.

The participating countries include Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, Bahrain, Sudan, Egypt, Kuwait, Palestine and Jordan.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

*Display of Bani Hamida hand-made products at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman, until July 31. (Tel. 6586967)

*Works by Iraqi artists Ali Al Najjar and Zia Hussein at Balaqna Art Gallery, Gardens Street. (Tel. 5537598), until July 23.

*Photo exhibition entitled "Jerusalem in Danger" by Khalid Al Zaghari at the Modern Educational School, Khalda, until July 31.

*Photography exhibition by Jan Kassey, at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until July 29.

*Paintings by Ali Al Ghoul at Greater Amman Municipality - Cultural Department, Ras Al Ain, until July 31.

*Silver jewelry exhibition at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, until July 20.

*Contemporary Arab Artists Exhibition, showing works of 60 Arab artists, at Dar Al Fann, Jabal Weibdeh, until July 24.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince receives Labour leader

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday received the leader of the Australian Labour Party Kim Beazley at the Royal Court. Prince Hassan and Mr. Beazley discussed bilateral relations, the Middle East peace process and other issues of common concern. Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha also held talks with Mr. Beazley and the two discussed bilateral cooperation in agricultural fields.

Minister opens municipal projects

IRBID (Petra) — Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Khreishan Wednesday opened several municipal projects. He also laid the foundation stones for Beit Yafa's and Hofa's new municipal headquarters.

Tarawneh concludes Qatar visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh Wednesday returned home upon the conclusion of a visit to Qatar during which he met with Qatari officials and discussed bilateral ties, scopes of cooperation and the latest developments in the peace process.

Bank assures JD 1.5 m for governorate

AMMAN (Petra) — General Manager of the Cities and Villages Development Bank Ahmad Hasban Wednesday visited the Jerash governorate and met with Governor Khamis Abu Salim to discuss financial matters. Mr. Hasban affirmed that the governorate would receive JD 1.5 million through the social security net.

Yemenis tour police academy

AMMAN (Petra) — A Yemeni police delegation Wednesday visited the Police Academy where they toured its divisions and were briefed on its role and services.

Miami police seek serial killer in Versace murder

MIAMI BEACH (R) — Police and FBI agents hunted an alleged serial killer and male prostitute they believe murdered fashion king Gianni Versace as royalty, stars, friends and admirers mourned the man who dressed the world's beautiful people.

Versace was shot twice in the head on the steps of his Miami Beach mansion by a lone gunman Tuesday morning.

Miami Beach Police Chief Richard Barreto said lawmen were searching for Andrew Cunanan, 27, already wanted in connection with four previous murders during a two-week, cross-country killing spree that began in Minneapolis in April.

"We have a number of articles of evidence that tie Mr. Cunanan to that crime," Mr. Barreto said. "He is the only suspect at this time."

"Cunanan is known to be a male prostitute who services a broad clientele," he said, adding he did not know if he had any relationship with Versace, who was homosexual.

As night fell over Miami Beach, usually a pulsating playground for models, fun-seekers and tourists, sombre crowds kept vigil outside the wrought-iron gates of Versace's luxury Mediterranean-style mansion on Ocean Drive.

They built a shrine of flowers and candles on the steps where he had slumped dead, blood pouring from two head wounds, after the killer struck.

Shock and disbelief reverberated from the cafes and model agencies of Miami Beach, an area he had helped revitalise, to the capitals of the fashion world over which he reigned.

"My reaction is one of revolt against such an unnatural and violent death, and one of profound grief," Giorgio Armani, along with Versace one of Italy's top stylists, said in Rome.

Diana, Princess of Wales, said she was devastated.

Versace, 50, symbolised Italian fashion to the world and dressed the likes of Diana, singers Madonna, Sting and Elton John, and actresses Demi Moore and Liz Hurley. He had built a multi-million-dollar empire after learning the basics of fashion from his mother. He was killed as he walked back home after buying magazines at the News Cafe on Ocean Drive, a beach-front street of renovated art deco hotels and trendy restaurants.

The killer ran away and several hours later police named Mr. Cunanan as the sole suspect. Police said he was armed and dangerous and they warned gays and lesbians in particular to be on guard.

"It appears that on occasion he frequents places where gay folks hang out," FBI Special Agent Paul-Philip said. "Nobody's safe in this. Everybody's at risk. Everybody's got to help us put this guy in jail."

Law enforcement officers stressed they had no knowledge if Mr. Cunanan had a relationship with Versace.

Mr. Barreto said a red truck found by police in Miami after Versace's killing belonged to Mr. Cunanan's last al-



World-renowned fashion designer Gianni Versace, seen in this July 6, 1997 file photo at the end of his high fashion collection in Paris, was shot and killed outside his mansion in Miami Beach (Reuter photo)

leged victim, a New Jersey cemetery caretaker shot dead in May.

Mr. Cunanan is on the FBI's list of 10 most wanted criminals. The FBI had distributed about 2,000 wanted posters portraying Mr. Cunanan in Florida in recent weeks but had sightings of him from around the country.

Globe-trotting Versace, who dressed some of the world's most beautiful women, was not a permanent resident of Miami Beach but frequently stayed at the white stone mansion, the only private residence on Ocean Drive.

Miami Beach, a finger of land off the Florida mainland, is the centre of Miami's vibrant fashion and music industry.

A senior manager at the News Cafe said Versace was his usual gracious self when he walked to the shop to buy magazines on Tuesday morning. He was a regular customer.

"He would hang out, relax, chill out, watch the parade on Ocean Drive. He didn't come here for business. He was always very gentle, unassuming, gracious, very private," Ryan Yorke told Reuters.

Other celebrity Miami residents such as singer Gloria Estefan and movie star Sylvester Stallone also lamented the tragedy. "He will never be duplicated," Mr. Stallone said.

"There are no words to describe how I feel right now," said top designer Gianfranco Ferré. "What happened is absurd, inexplicable, terrible...I feel only infinite pain."

Princess Diana, a friend and client, said in a statement from the south of France: "I am devastated by the loss of this great and talented man."

But ordinary people who could probably not afford his lavish designs also mourned.

"It's very sad. Versace was to the fashion world what John Lennon was to music," said John Winarski, 35, a South Beach resident. "I think Miami Beach will suffer from this."

Versace's early collections were classic, clean lines but he later began to explore brighter colours and designs inspired by the antiquity of ancient Greece. At last week's "haute couture" shows in Paris, he showed a collection consisting largely of tight black dresses with heavily padded, angular shoulders which he characterised as "a kind of Byzantine minimalism" and "Neo-Japanese."

The grey-haired designer, who often sported stubble on his chin, was born on Dec. 2, 1946. He moved to Milan at the age of 25 and drew his first prêt-à-porter collection in 1972.

In 1978 he launched his own Gianni Versace label in a fashion show in Milan.

Versace had been in partnership with his brother Santo and was planning to issue public stock in the company, whose sales rose by 23.5 per cent in 1996 to \$483 million. But the murder seemed certain to derail any immediate plans to issue shares.



Police look for evidence just inside the front gate of Gianni Versace's mansion on Miami Beach. The fifty-year-old fashion designer was shot twice in the head at close range as he opened the front gate to his home (Reuter photo)

Santer: Candidate states for EU enlargement still need reforms

STRASBOURG (AFP) — The five Eastern European countries slated for entry to the European Union (EU) must still introduce key reforms before joining the EU, European Commission President Jacques Santer said Wednesday.

Presenting the so-called Agenda 2000 document on the expansion of the 15-state body to the European Parliament, Mr. Santer said, "significant additional efforts are needed before these countries can join the EU."

Agenda 2000 opens the way for negotiations to begin next year on the entry of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and the Mediterranean island of Cyprus to the EU.

The plan still needs approval from the heads of government of all current members at an EU summit in Luxembourg in December.

Despite recommending that these countries introduce further key reforms to favour their future member-

ship, the European Commission considers the candidate states are on course to meet conditions for membership, which include political and economic reforms.

In order to help them meet their goals, the commission is offering them substantial financial assistance of three billion ECUs (\$3.3 billion) a year between 2000 and 2006.

For countries not included in the first wave of negotiations, the commission has proposed the creation of a standing conference designed to help them address problems which currently stand as barriers to their membership.

Slovakia, for example, was ruled out because its political system has been insufficiently democratised. For Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia and Lithuania, the main problems are economic.

All countries seeking to join the EU must also adapt their security systems to meet international standards.

The EU document in addition calls for cutbacks in structural aid to member states, which accounts for 30 per cent of the total EU budget, Mr. Santer told MPs.

"Currently, more than half the EU population enjoys structural aid, which is too much," Mr. Santer said, adding that that figure had to be brought down to 40 per cent.

He said the criteria laid out for countries to receive such aid must be strictly enforced and that regions with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) equivalent to 75 per cent of the EU average would gradually lose that aid.

That means that the French Mediterranean island of Corsica and Ireland would no longer enjoy EU aid by 2006.

Aid to farmers is also to be substantially reduced as it eats up 45 per cent of the EU budget, Mr. Santer said, adding that the EU could not afford to overcompensate farmers.

2 die, 49 hurt in Kashmir bomb blasts

SRINAGAR (AFP) — Two people died and 49 were injured in three separate bomb attacks in Indian-administered Kashmir, police sources said Wednesday.

The deaths occurred in the town of Bijbehara, 45 kilometres south of here, after explosives packed in the bag of a scooter went off Wednesday. A police spokesman said four people were also injured.

Five people, meanwhile, were in critical condition after two earlier explosions late Tuesday.

"Twenty-five people were hurt in Anantnag, close to Bijbehara, when a device went off in the town's main park."

An earlier bombing, directed at a military vehicle in the border town of Kupwara, around 85 kilometres north of Srinagar, left five security personnel injured. Fifteen civilians at a nearby busstand were hurt by shrapnel and debris.

No one has claimed responsibility for any of the attacks but police suspect they were carried out by Muslim separatist militants opposed to Indian rule in the Himalayan state.

Muslim militant groups have in the past blamed police in public parks, arguing people should not be celebrating during the state's struggle for independence.

Around 20,000 people

have died in Indian-administered Kashmir since a separatist campaign was launched in 1989. India accuses Pakistan, which holds the northern third of the territory, of fuelling the violence.

Islamabad denies the charge but says it offers diplomatic backing to the call for Kashmiri self-determination. The two nations have fought two wars over the territory.

On Tuesday, Kashmir's director general of police claimed violence was on the decline and could be over by next year, saying local civilians were no longer backing the separatists.

Hindu nationalists predict victory in next Indian elections

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Hindu nationalist leader Lal Krishna Advani claimed Wednesday that his party and its allies would sweep the next general elections in India.

Mr. Advani told a news conference here that his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) would have no difficulty in forming a government here with the help of its allies if an election were held now.

"I am confident that as things stand today, if there is an election, the BJP along with its allies will win hands down with a comfortable majority in parliament," he said.

"We are not looking for new (regional) allies (beyond the four we already have)," Mr. Advani added.

The BJP finished as the single largest party in hung elections held in April-May

1996, with 161 of the 545-seat Indian parliament.

It then formed a national government for the first time but resigned within 13 days after failing to win majority support in the house.

Mr. Advani, the high-profile BJP president, Tuesday ended a 59-day nationwide tour of the country to mark 50 years of India's independence from British rule in August 1947.

He lashed out at Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's centre-left minority United Front government, which took office in April.

"There is inherent instability and uncertainty in the ruling set-up," he said. "Things are in a very, very unstable situation... What will be the final outcome can be anybody's guess."

NATO ready to answer any Bosnian Serb reprisal

SARAJEVO (R) — The NATO-led peace force in Bosnia said its troops stood ready to respond to threatened retaliation by Serb nationalists angry at a NATO swoop on indicted war criminals.

Two bombings in Serb-controlled territory, which apparently targeted international monitors, raised concerns about a potential nationalist backlash against the tougher approach by Western powers towards suspected war criminals.

The NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) said Tuesday it received a letter calling on Serbs to take revenge on the multinational force for a raid last week against two Serbs wanted by the United Nations for war crimes.

"We received a piece of paper and it's entitled a 'proclamation' addressed to the Serb nation which appears to be a threat against SFOR troops," spokesman Major John Blakeley told Reuters.

He declined to divulge details of the letter but said: "Suffice it to say while there are certain threats to SFOR our forces are well-trained, well-equipped and have robust rules of engagement to deal with any situation which may arise."

Maj. Blakeley said there had been no reprisals so far against the 31,000-strong force since it launched "Operation Tango" last week in the northwest town of Prijedor.

British special forces arrested one suspect and shot dead another who resisted and opened fire. Both men were accused of helping to orchestrate a genocidal campaign against Muslims and Croats early in the Bosnian War.

SFOR said necessary security precautions would be taken where necessary but said the situation remained "calm."

Nationalist Bosnian Serb leaders have condemned the NATO raid as unjust but have refrained from calls to arms in public statements.

During the 1992-95 Bosnian War, Serb forces fired on U.N. soldiers and took them hostage to try to fend off NATO bombing.

The NATO-led peace force now strictly supervises Bosnia's rival armies, obliging them to keep heavy weapons in storage sites and obtain permission to move troops.

The United States warned that it would not tolerate revenge attacks for the NATO operation, which marked a more aggressive approach towards war crimes suspects still at large.

"They have no call to take any retaliatory action and it would be a grave mistake to do so," U.S. President Bill Clinton told reporters in Washington.

Mr. Clinton pointed out that the Dayton peace agreement signed by the Serbs and their Muslim and Croat counterparts required indicted war criminals to be handed over to a U.N. tribunal in the Netherlands.

The U.S. State Department said the American embassy in Sarajevo and peacekeeping troops had been placed on a heightened state of alert after two bombings in Serb-controlled territory.

A bomb blast destroyed a truck belonging to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Sunday night and a second bomb went off outside the flat of an OSCE monitor Monday night. The explosions caused no injuries.

The international high representative to Bosnia, Carlos Westendorp, supported the NATO swoop and held talks with Russian diplomats Tuesday to allay Moscow's criticism of the raid.

Russia, which has been sympathetic to the Serb cause, castigated the operation as a "cowboy raid" that would damage the peace process.

Cambodian royalists name new premier

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodia's royalist FUNCINPEC party Wednesday named Foreign Minister Ung Huot to succeed deposed Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh, senior party sources said.

The move consolidated Second Prime Minister Hun Sen's ousting of the prince earlier this month in two days of street battles.

"The move was agreed between both factions of the party last night (Tuesday) and this morning Toan Chhay met with members of his group to tell them of the decision," a senior party source told AFP.

Mr. Hun Sen, who has repeatedly stressed that he has not led a coup d'état, had asked the party to replace Prince Ranariddh at the head of the royalist party and as first prime minister.

Mr. Ung Huot said he would accept the job provided he remained as foreign minister. He added Mr. Hun Sen had approved his nomination.

Sources stressed the decision was made by FUNCINPEC members remaining in Cambodia and did not have the approval of scores of senior party officials and members who have fled the country fearing persecution.

"This is a decision made by FUNCINPEC members in Cambodia, so it is not totally official yet," one source said, noting that only 10 of the 33 members of the party's steering committee

were in the country.

Party sources said the choice of Mr. Ung Huot was a compromise which will likely see Toan Chhay, leader of a renegade faction of FUNCINPEC, become party president.

Mr. Hun Sen moved against the prince and his supporters on July 5, militarily seizing control of the capital and most of the country after accusing Prince Ranariddh of illegally negotiating with Khmer Rouge rebels.

Mr. Toan Chhay was Mr. Hun Sen's first choice to succeed the prince. But Mr. Toan Chhay is not a member of parliament and so is not eligible to be prime minister under current laws.

Meanwhile, a diplomatic source said Wednesday as many as 40 Cambodians may have been killed for political reasons in the wake of this month's overthrow of Prince Ranariddh.

The source, who declined to be identified, said there was evidence some victims had been tortured, including four bodyguards of Prince Ranariddh's top military commander, General Nhiek Bun Chhay, who were found with their eyes gouged out.

"It doesn't seem to be good," the source said of the human rights situation since Mr. Hun Sen's coup against his co-premier and coalition partner Prince Ranariddh.

"There seem to have been 40 deaths that one could say

with relative safety were politically motivated," the source said.

While attacks on officials from Prince Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC party appeared to be going on across the country, the figure of 40 deaths had been compiled mostly from incidents in the Phnom Penh area although it was not clear if the killings were part of a planned purge, he said.

"It's very unclear if this is a centrally orchestrated, carefully planned purge or more dispersed — a general uncoordinated attack on FUNCINPEC officials," he said. "But even if it is the latter, it could be stopped," he said.

The reports drew a plea from absent King Norodom Sihanouk who in a letter to acting head of state, Chea Sim, ordered the army and police to stop summary executions and give all accused a fair trial.

He said he was "deeply saddened" by the reports.

The king has met with a French envoy and Thursday he will see foreign ministers from three Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) before receiving the U.S. ambassador to Beijing, James Sasser, Friday.

Most foreign nationals have fled the country in a mass exodus, as foreign governments ponder the crisis, and have yet to recognise the new political realities on the ground.

The Cambodian Red

Cross (CRC) meanwhile launched an urgent international appeal for more than 3,000 victims of the fierce battles here.

In a separate development, Thai immigration officials released Cambodian opposition leader Sam Rainsy Wednesday after briefly detaining him as he tried to enter Cambodia's western Poipet town, witnesses said.

"I will go back to Bangkok now," said Mr. Sam Rainsy soon after his release. He added that he had been detained by Thai authorities who feared for his safety.

Mr. Sam Rainsy was held as he attempted to cross the border into Poipet, a town controlled by royalist forces loyal to Prince Ranariddh, to meet members of his Khmer Nation Party (KNP) who had fled Phnom Penh fearing repression from Mr. Hun Sen.

Mr. Sam Rainsy came to the Thai-Cambodian border Tuesday. He said he had met Prince Ranariddh in France and had agreed to join with the prince's FUNCINPEC party to resist Mr. Hun Sen's takeover of the Cambodian government through what he called illegal means.

He was detained as he tried to slip into Poipet to meet 52 members of his party, who with about 300 others from Prince Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC party, are holed up waiting to flee the country.

Starr concludes White House aide committed suicide

LITTLE ROCK (R) — Whitewater prosecutor Kenneth Starr said Tuesday his investigation into the 1993 death of former Deputy White House Counsel Vince Foster concluded that Foster had committed suicide.

"Based on investigation, analysis and review of the evidence by experts and experienced investigators and prosecutors, this office

concluded that Mr. Foster committed suicide by gunshot," Mr. Starr said in a statement issued from his Washington office.

Authorities have consistently ruled out foul play in the case but Mr. Starr launched a fresh investigation after questions arose about documents allegedly removed from Foster's office on the night of his death on

July 20, 1993.

Foster was a lifelong friend of President Bill Clinton and, like the president, a native of the small Arkansas town of Hope. He was also a partner of Hillary Rodham Clinton at the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock and went to the White House when Mr. Clinton became president in 1993.

Mr. Foster was assigned to

handle the Clintons' personal financial and legal affairs, including their investment in the ill-fated real estate development that lies at the centre of the Whitewater saga. His death gave rise to a variety of bizarre, extreme-right conspiracy theories, some of which held that Mr. Clinton or his wife ordered their friend killed because he knew too much.



Basque riot police stand between protesters and supporters of Herri Batasuna, the political wing of the Basque guerrilla group ETA, sitting at a bar in San Sebastian. The killing of Miguel Angel Blanco, a local council politician, has sparked confrontation between Basques (Reuter photo)

Basque politician: ETA has committed 'suicide'

MADRID (R) — A leading Basque nationalist politician said Wednesday the separatist guerrilla group ETA had committed political suicide by killing a young town councillor and sparking national outrage.

Inaki Anasagasti, chief spokesman for the Basque Nationalist Party, said that while many Basques shared the dream of an independent homeland, they strongly repudiated ETA for the assassination of 29-year-old Miguel Angel Blanco.

"ETA has lost the image of a people's movement and has shown themselves for what they are — a group of assassins, a group of terrorists," he told state television.

Huge crowds of demonstrators took to the streets overnight in several major cities in the fourth day of angry protests against ETA.

In the southern city of Seville, half a million people turned out, chanting "Basques yes, ETA no."

In the northeastern city of Zaragoza, Blanco's grieving

family led hundreds of thousands in a protest march. Archbishop Elias Yanes told the crowd: "There is no possible justification for this murder."

But the public outcry did not deter ETA from issuing a death threat against a second Basque politician, 63-year-old Jose Luis Caso, a town councillor in the Basque town of Renteria. He has been protected by bodyguards since the threat was made Monday.

Blanco, a 29-year-old Basque town councillor and member of Spain's ruling party, was kidnapped last Thursday by ETA rebels who vowed to execute him in 48 hours if the government did not give in to their demands. They shot him twice in the head Saturday, and he died 12 hours later.

The killing of an ordinary, low-ranking official stunned Spaniards and marked a crucial turning point in public opinion. Basques who once whispered their opposition to ETA in private are now

screening it in public.

An opinion poll taken after Blanco's kidnapping but before his death showed 66 per cent of Spaniards support the Conservative government's stance against negotiating with ETA. Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar has vowed to crack down on the guerrilla group.

"ETA has committed suicide because they are left without any support in the streets, they are left without any justification for their actions," Mr. Anasagasti told state television. His moderate party is the leading political force in the Basque country of northern Spain.

Mr. Anasagasti said ETA had now completely lost the "romantic image" that attracted many young Basques to its cause beginning in the 1960s with its creation during the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco.

ETA has killed nearly 800 people in its 29-year struggle for a Basque homeland encompassing parts of northern Spain and southern France.

While protests overnight were mostly peaceful, gatherings in some cities in the Basque region once again turned violent.

In Bilbao, ETA opponents threw stones and bottles at offices and bars used by the rebel group's political wing, Herri Batasuna.

Herri Batasuna has called on its supporters to mount a demonstration Saturday night in the Basque city of San Sebastian. Authorities are worried that it could be the flashpoint for more violence.

Authorities were also taking seriously the threat against the Renteria town councillor. While the Basque town of Erma buried Blanco Monday, rebels sprayed "you will be next" on a wall outside Mr. Caso's home in Renteria. He is also a member of the ruling party.

Analysts said ETA might be signalling that it planned to target low-ranking Popular Party politicians generally. The meeting is the first high-level contact between the two countries since Kenya closed down the Rwandan embassy in Nairobi 13 months ago after Kigali refused to waive the immunity of a senior diplomat implicated in an attempted murder of an exiled Hutu politician.

North Korea opens fire with artillery at border — Seoul

SEOUL (R) — North Korea launched artillery shells at a Southern border post Wednesday during a fierce exchange of fire, Seoul military officials said, describing the incident as a "serious provocation."

North Korea in a Pyongyang radio broadcast accused the South of a "grave military provocation act."

It said several North Korean soldiers were wounded, without giving an exact number. Yeo Sook-Dong, the chief spokesman for South Korea's joint chiefs of staff, told reporters that North Korean forces fired 10 artillery rounds that landed near a guard post on the Southern side of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

No Southern casualties were reported in the bombardment that followed an exchange of rifle fire.

It was one of the most serious border incidents in recent years.

South Korean troops spotted an ambulance heading to a North Korean guard post shortly after the shooting, Mr. Yeo said.

"It is a rare and very serious provocation by North Korean troops," said a Defence Ministry official, who declined to be identified. "The move appears to be intentional."

The shooting occurred only three weeks before the two Koreas, the United States and China were due to hold talks to pave the way for negotiations aimed at thrashing out a peace treaty to replace a truce that ended the 1950-53 Korean War. Senior officials from the four nations are due to meet in New York on Aug. 5 to set an agenda and other procedural details for the peace talks.

Mr. Yeo said the incident began at 10:57 a.m. (0157 GMT) when a group of North Korean soldiers crossed the military demarcation line that runs through the middle of the DMZ bisecting the Korean Peninsula.

After repeated broadcast warnings, South Korean troops fired warning shots into the air. North Korean forces responded by aiming 70-80 rounds of rifle fire at two guard posts, which responded with a similar burst of fire.

North Korean forces escalated the incident with the artillery barrage, Mr. Yeo said. The South responded with one round from a recoilless rifle.

The shooting ended after about 50 minutes when the Southern side broadcast a ceasefire proposal.

The DMZ was set up as a buffer zone at the end of the war, but is now one of the world's most heavily fortified frontiers.

In April, North and South Korean troops exchanged warning shots at the DMZ shortly before visiting U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen flew to the area.

South Korea Wednesday accused the North of escalating border tensions by opening fire at Southern guard posts and warned it would not tolerate any future provocations.

"We strongly warn that we will never tolerate any provocation in the future," Lieutenant-General Jeong Young-Moo said in a statement. Gen. Jeong, in charge of anti-North Korean military operations, said the incident was a serious violation of the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

He said North and South Korean troops were engaged in fierce fighting for about 20 minutes Wednesday morning after the North attacked Southern guard posts with about 80 rounds of rifle shots and 10 artillery shells.

He said the North had deliberately tried to escalate military tensions, and noted that the incident followed several intrusions into Southern waters by North Korean Navy vessels in recent months.

Gen. Jeong said the shooting erupted after seven North Korean soldiers refused to retreat after being warned repeatedly that they had intruded into Southern territory.

Later Wednesday, the DMZ was tense but calm, the United Nations Command (UNC) said.

"There is no change in the alert or Watchcon status of South Korean or American forces," UNC spokesman Jim Coles told AFP here.

Mr. Coles said a United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC) team had gone to the site to investigate.

Until they returned, he said, the UNCMAC could not comment on whether the incident — triggered by seven North Korean troops crossing the line into the South — was a deliberate provocation.

It had not yet been ruled out that the seven had strayed across the imperfectly marked border or that it may have been an attempted defection.

However, he said the area was one in which patrolling troops of both sides usually followed well defined paths, and that before the firing started the South had blared loud-speaker warnings to the seven to return to their own side.

The Defence Ministry said frontline troops were put on alert in the Chorwon-Kun area of the DMZ, some 80 kilometres northwest of Seoul, where the exchange broke out late morning.

But military sources said the alert in Chorwon-Kun was not a change of status, but an increased watchfulness.

No other incidents were reported along the 249 kilometres long, four kilometre-wide belt that was drawn to separate the two sides.

Taiwan repatriates 2 Chinese hijackers

TAIPEI (AFP) — A Chinese vessel sailed directly from Xiamen Wednesday to pick up two mainland hijackers from a Taiwanese frontline island in the first such repatriation, an official said here.

Huang Shugang and Han Fengying were returned to China's Red Cross representatives who were authorised by Beijing's quasi-official Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) to travel to Kinmen (Quemoy), just 2.3 kilometres off the mainland's southeastern coast, the official said.

Mr. Huang and Mrs. Han had remained in a detention in northern Taiwan since being paroled in January after serving more than half of their prison terms of six and seven years respectively.

They were escorted by Taiwanese police and officials from Taipei's counterpart body the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) to Kinmen Tuesday, the SEF official said.

China's Red Cross official Chang Xilin called on both sides of the strait to join forces fighting crime and urged Taipei to send back the remaining 14 mainland hijackers jailed on this Nationalist island.

The Chinese boat left Kinmen around 10:30 a.m. (0230 GMT) for Xiamen, the SEF official said.

Mrs. Han left behind in Taiwan her husband Yang Mingde and son Yang Yang who is now studying in a Taipei primary school.

The couple forced a Sichuan Airline aircraft to land here in September 1993. Mrs. Han is serving a 10-year jail sentence.

Mr. Huang was convicted for diverting a China Southern Airline passenger jet here in April 1993.

Taipei had earlier refused to return the 16 Chinese hijackers, who diverted 12 airliners to land on this Nationalist island between April 1993 and December 1994, citing the lack of a legal basis.

But on May 14, China sent back a Taiwanese hijacker Liu Shan-Chung in the first cross-strait repatriation since the two rivals were separated in 1949 at the end of a civil war.

Rwandan strongman visits Kenya for talks with Arap Moi

NAIROBI (R) — Rwandan military strongman Major-General Paul Kagame arrived in the Kenyan capital Wednesday for talks with President Daniel Arap Moi, officials said.

They said Gen. Kagame, Rwanda's vice-president, defence minister and military supremo, will hold talks with Mr. Arap Moi on issues in the Great Lakes region and bilateral matters between the two hostile nations.

The meeting is the first high-level contact between the two countries since Kenya closed down the Rwandan embassy in Nairobi 13 months ago after Kigali refused to waive the immunity of a senior diplomat implicated in an attempted murder of an exiled Hutu politician.

"They (Mr. Arap Moi and Gen. Kagame) will discuss a number of very serious issues involving the Great Lakes region as well as bilateral matters," a Kenyan government official told Reuters.

"The whole idea is to improve ties and remove areas of suspicion between the two countries and their leaders."

Political analysts said Kenya, undergoing a tense political period, had become increasingly uneasy with small but militarily powerful Rwanda's ties with leading Kenyan opposition figures.

Kenya's opposition is spearheading a campaign for constitutional reforms before general elections due later this year. They have warned Mr. Arap Moi of a Zaire-style rebellion unless he gave in to the clamour for reforms.

"They (Kenyans) are wary about growing relations between Kagame and Kenyan opposition figures and would like that neutralised. You can only do that by improving relations with Kagame," an African diplomat told Reuters.

Gen. Kagame, whose forces helped propel Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to power in 1986, admitted earlier this month that Rwanda planned and led the overthrow of President Mobutu Sese Seko in former Zaire now Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Gen. Kagame told the Washington Post that tiny Rwanda had provided training and arms for Laurent Kabila's rebel forces in Africa's third largest country even before the push to overthrow Mr. Mobutu began

last October. The immediate result of the Arap Moi-Kagame talks would be the reopening of the Rwandan embassy closed down after a Rwandan diplomat was implicated in an attempted assassination of an exiled Hutu politician, the officials said.

Gen. Kagame wants Kenyan action against leading Hutu residents in Kenya and accused by Kigali of leading, taking part or planning the 1994 genocide of an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Relations between Kenya and Rwanda have been frosty particularly over Nairobi's decision to allow the Hutus a safe haven.

Mr. Arap Moi was a close friend of murdered Rwandan Hutu military strongman Major-General Juvenal Habyarimana.

Habyarimana's assassination in April 1994 sparked the genocide when loyal and angry supporters took up arms and hunted down Tutsis and Hutus opposed to his rule.

Meanwhile, Rwanda has accused European Commissioner Ennio Bonino of misleading the international community that there were still hundreds of thousands of refugees outside the Central African state.

A statement issued by the Rwandan presidency late Tuesday accused Mrs. Bonino of waging a slander campaign against Rwanda.

"Even after the massive return of Rwandan refugees from the former Zaire and Tanzania, Mrs. Bonino still chooses to mislead international opinion by maintaining that there are still several hundreds of thousands of refugees outside Rwanda," the statement said.

"She (Mrs. Bonino) has never concealed her bitterness over the dismantling of the refugee camps and the subsequent return home of the Rwandan people."

"Indeed it is evident that she has been the mouthpiece of those in her own part of the world who are not happy with the changes in the Great Lakes region," the statement added.

The Rwandan statement came three days after Mrs. Bonino, EU commissioner for humanitarian affairs, launched a scathing attack on political developments in central Africa, describing recent events as "the unattractive side of African assertiveness."

Passengers capsized overloaded Indonesian boat

JAKARTA (AFP) — An Indonesian boat that sank leaving at least 83 dead capsized when passengers surged to one side of the overloaded vessel, an official said Wednesday.

Passengers rushed to one side of the vessel, the Peldatari, as it neared the shores of Samosir Island in the middle of Lake Toba in the province of North Sumatra Sunday, said T. Lumbantobing who heads the North Sumatra Water Transport Department.

"An initial investigation by members of the Maritime Office and the Maritime Police Tuesday showed that there were no holes or leaks in the hull of the Peldatari," Mr. Lumbantobing said by telephone from Parapat, a town on the

shores of Lake Toba.

Survivors of the boat mishap were quoted by newspapers saying the Peldatari had sprung a leak while on Lake Toba, one of the deepest lakes in the world and the highest in Southeast Asia.

"The passengers had rushed to the side closer to the shore because there was a bus awaiting them but there was only a very limited space," he said.

He declined to confirm reports in the Jakarta Daily which Wednesday quoted him as saying that the high number of casualties was because most of the passengers had been drinking alcohol at a cultural festival.

Attempts to recover more of the missing went ahead Wednesday. "We have found six more

bodies today and they bring up the total number of dead victims to 83," Mr. Lumbantobing said.

He added there were four inhabitants of Samosir still missing following the accident while "there are many people from outside the region claiming that their relatives had been on that boat and were still missing."

At least 200 people were on the Peldatari when it sank while going from Parapat to Tomok, a town on Samosir Island in the middle of Lake Toba.

The Jakarta Daily said that at least 115 people, including the 78 already found, have been reported missing.

Transport Minister Haryanto Dhanutirto has said the authorities would investigate apparent violations,

including overloading and a lack of proper equipment.

A team from the Transport Ministry's provincial office in Medan, the capital of North Sumatra, was due to arrive on site Thursday to begin investigation into the accident, Mr. Lumbantobing said.

The 1,707-square-kilometre Toba Lake is the largest in Southeast Asia. With a depth of more than 450 metres, it is one of the deepest in the world.

Indonesia is frequently hit by shipping disasters off the thousands of islands that make up the archipelago.

In January 1996, an overloaded ferry sank in had weather off Weh Island on the northern tip of Sumatra leaving 338 people dead or missing.

Panel: Huang funnelled foreign funds to Democrats

WASHINGTON (R) — A U.S. Senate committee probing campaign finance abuses revealed direct evidence Tuesday that Asian-American fund-raiser John Huang helped funnel \$50,000 to the Democratic Party from a giant Indonesian firm friendly to President Bill Clinton.

In response, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) said it would return the money.

The committee heard testimony and examined documents showing that in 1992 Indonesia's Lippo Group reimbursed an American subsidiary for a \$50,000 contribution to the Democratic National Committee in August 1992.

The reimbursement was sought by Mr. Huang, who was then an executive of the Los Angeles-based subsidiary, Hip Hing Holdings, a money-losing operation whose sole asset was a parking lot believed worth

several million dollars.

Mr. Huang, a former Commerce Department official who Mr. Clinton and others pushed to have hired as a DNC fund-raiser for the 1996 election cycle, is accused by Republicans of raising hundreds of thousands of dollars in illegal political contributions, allegedly of foreign origin.

The 16-member committee chaired by Tennessee Republican Senator Fred Thompson heard from a former Hip Hing officer, Juliana Utomo, who worked for Mr. Huang and said she signed the \$50,000 check for the DNC at the request of Mr. Huang or another officer without knowing what the DNC was.

Days later, Mr. Huang sent a request to Lippo's Jakarta headquarters seeking a wire transfer of \$146,500. It specifically cited the \$50,000 to the DNC victory fund as an expense for which reim-

bursment was sought.

"There's a pretty clear document here requesting a reimbursement for a \$50,000 donation to the DNC victory fund, which certainly looks like the movement of foreign money into an American campaign in 1992," observed Senator Joseph Lieberman, a Connecticut Democrat.

A DNC statement issued later said the Hip Hing contribution would be returned. The DNC appealed to the Republican National Committee to return a questionable \$500,000 contribution to the Republican Party in 1992 from Asian-American contributor Michael Kojima.

The committee also made public a document that showed a Chinese-born British citizen, Eric Hotung of Hong Kong, promised a \$100,000 contribution to the Democrats in 1995 in exchange for a meeting with Mr. Clinton's national secu-

city aides to seek "a higher profile for Taiwan on the world stage."

"Mr. Hotung has several policy options that he would like to suggest for consideration by administration officials," said a Sept. 20, 1995, memo from Democratic National Committee Co-Chair Don Fowler to White House political aide Doug Sosnik.

White House Special Counsel Lanny Davis said Mr. Hotung had a five-minute meeting with then-Deputy National Security Adviser Sandy Berger Oct. 4, 1995, but denied it was in exchange for a campaign contribution.

"Mr. Berger had no knowledge of any contributions or promise of contributions by Mr. Hotung. We do not consider such a meeting with Mr. Berger to have been inappropriate," he said.

Republicans contend Mr. Huang was a lackey of the Lippo group's controlling family, the Riads.

Powell says China should be engaged to improve human rights

MANILA (AFP) — China should be met with a policy of engagement which will eventually lead to reforms in human rights and the rule of law, former U.S. military chief Colin Powell said here Wednesday.

General Powell, who is on a lecture tour of Asia, told local and foreign businessmen China was achieving "superpower status," not because of its military forces but due to its economic growth.

"They are becoming a power on the world stage through economic activity and the only way to deal with a nation such as this is ... by

engagement ... encouraging it to participate in the world economic trading system," he said.

"In due course, (engagement) will also begin to affect (China) in respect to human rights, in respect to the rule of law, or all the issues that have arisen in U.S.-China ties, Gen. Powell said.

"They will have to respond if they want to be a full partner in the world economic and trading system," he said.

He praised the economic growth in Asia but acknowledged there were still "difficult situations that will have to be dealt with," such as

"terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (and) rogue regimes like North Korea, Libya, Iran and Iraq."

Gen. Powell also said the United States should "not ... ignore the lessons of the past" adding "one of those lessons is for the U.S. to remain strong, the U.S. to remain engaged."

Washington should not forget "its friends both across the Atlantic and here, across the Pacific," he added, saying the U.S. should retain its military presence in the region because it is a stabilising force.

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Health for all

FOR MORE than a decade now successive governments have been toying with the idea of a comprehensive health insurance project that would cover the entire population of Jordan. Almost every health minister since 1980 has had his own plan on how to realise the project. But no serious work has so far materialised.

At the moment almost 65 per cent of the population is insured through either the army's comprehensive insurance or its civil service equivalent.

A small percentage of the remaining third of the population is also insured because they qualify for receiving social aid since they are categorised as poor.

However, the quality of medical services provided by the army or government hospitals is far from perfect. Less than a dozen army and government hospitals have to cope with too many patients and they operate at inadequate resources.

Providing health services is an expensive affair everywhere. The case of Jordan being unable to provide adequate services to its citizens is not an exception. There are many and difficult problems even in such rich and advanced countries as Britain and the U.S.

However, for Jordan to improve its services a joint effort is required. The government, the private sector and civil society organisations need to pool their resources and come up with a comprehensive plan. Although most private sector companies have health insurance schemes, many smaller businesses and shop owners do not provide any health cover for their workers.

What is needed then is to have every worker or employee, in the private or public sectors, contribute a small percentage of their income to a health fund in which employers contribute a matching amount. Parents should also be made to pay a certain percentage to cover their children. This percentage should double with every other child. These contributions coupled with the Ministry of Health and Royal Medical Services can provide the base for building a comprehensive scheme from which the poor and unemployed could benefit. Such a fund could probably be run by the Social Security Corporation.

Under such a scheme all public hospitals would be privatised and health care provided through contracting insurance agencies.

It goes without saying that the health of a nation is a measure of its productivity. It is for that reason that a comprehensive health insurance scheme should be devised and put into operation as soon as possible.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily drew a contrast between the U.S. policy towards the Balkans and the war criminals among the Serbian leaders, on the one hand, and Israel and its human rights violations, on the other. While the U.S., acting through the U.N. peacekeeping forces, has succeeded in bringing peace and security to the Balkans, it has shown total failure in ending the Middle East issue despite its claim that it sponsors the peace process here, said Mahmoud Rimawi. In the Balkans, the U.S. chased war criminals and arrested them, ended an era of genocide and ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia and upheld justice, but in the Middle East, where Israel continues to occupy lands belonging to three Arab states, where the Israelis commit all forms of atrocities, racial discrimination, ethnic cleansing and murder, the U.S. stands out alone among nations of the world as a supporter of the criminals, said the writer. He said justice is indivisible except for the U.S. which applies a different policy when it comes to dealing with the Jewish state which it has been supplying with the means of power, enabling it to perpetuate its hold on Arab territories. While the U.S. won appreciation for what it achieved in the Balkans, said the writer, it lost all credibility in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict that has lasted for more than 50 years.

A WRITER for Al Dustour said that the Jordan-Israel peace treaty has brought the Kingdom losses at the economic and political levels and frustrated the Jordanian hopes of stability, security and prosperity. Basem Sakkiha said tourists who used to come to Jordan and stay for some days are now spending only hours visiting sites as part of package tours organised by the Israeli tourist offices. A traveller from Canada now opts for El Al airline, not the Royal Jordanian (RJ), and is flown small aircraft to reach Amman, thus saving at least \$400 which would have otherwise been paid to the RJ, he noted. The writer said that at the political level, Jordan is accused by various Arab states of ganging up with Israel and other forces hostile to the Arabs. He said that peace with Israel has never been something that the masses craved for and, anyway, it is dead and awaits burial. It is true that some Jews in Israel might be oriented towards peace, but the Israeli government policies have killed any lingering hopes in this peace, said the writer. Jordanians have tasted the kind of peace Israel is trying to impose on them and they naturally reject it. At the same time, the Jordanians, regrettably, witness a retreat in democracy in their own country, something that drives further despair into their hearts.

View from Academia

Gibran, fezzes, Pepsi and Arab contribution

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

I READ the other day a prose piece by Gibran Khalil Gibran entitled "Independence and Fezzes," which includes an anecdote (based on a real incident) and a comment by Gibran on it.

The anecdote tells the story of a Syrian intellectual (i.e., of the then Greater Syria) who was travelling on a French ship from Syria to Egypt. The intellectual was, as the custom was then, wearing a fez. When asked by the French captain and seamen, as the habit was in Western countries, to take off his fez upon sitting at the dinner table, he insisted that he would not (clinging also to the custom of his own culture) and then wrote an article describing what happened to him and condemning the crew's attempt to force him to do something which ran counter to his own beliefs.

Gibran begins his comment by admiring the position of the Syrian intellectual. "I like such protest [on the part of the Syrian] because it reflects the Oriental's insistence on a symbol of his private life." He lauds the fact that Easterners do cling onto customs and habits which form, in part at least, an important level of their identity. He even calls the Syrian intellectual's act an act of courage.

Immediately, however, Gibran embarks on a discussion of the complexities of the matter and of its deeper ironic meanings, emphasising that his own admiration of the Syrian intellectual's feat begins to dissipate as he ponders on such deeper ironies.

In Gibran's mind, the Syrian intellectual, by insisting on not taking off his fez, is in reality insisting on a comparatively insignificant thing. How? Well, isn't the fez (a symbol of his identity), in the first place, made in a foreign (Western) country? Is not the Syrian intellectual travelling on a foreign (French) ship? Is not he wearing Western clothes? Is he not eating Western food? Is not his country colonised by a Western power? Is he not importing foreign art and consuming foreign products?

"Had our intellectual," Gibran says, "thought about such deeper matters, he would not have hesitated one second to take his fez off?" "The problem with our intellectual," he goes on, "is that he has objected to the results and not the causes, the appearance and not the substance." Gibran reminds the intellectual that his (the intellectual's) grand-

father travelled on a Syrian ship, wore clothes made in Syria and dined with Syrian captains and crew members. "I say to our intellectual and all fez-defending individuals, make your fezzes with your hands and then do whatever you see fit about them on board of a ship, at the top of a mountain or in the bottom of a valley."

There is a great deal of truth in what Gibran is saying. In his own time, as in ours today, many people in our culture would cling to ultimately insignificant symbols and appearances. What makes us truly Arab or Muslim? Is it our clothes or is it our thoughts, ideas and behaviour and the impact we make?

Normally (and the Arab culture is by no means normal at this point in time) clothes are important. In a healthy state, they symbolise, reflect, harmonise with and mirror an inner reality. An Arab in such a state wears Arab (or Muslim) clothes, speaks Arab words, articulates Arab thoughts, behaves in an Arab way, etc. In an abnormal, unhealthy state (as the case seems to be at this point) the inner and the outer realities are divorced. I wear Arab (Muslim) clothes, but I cheat in the classroom, drive maniacally in the street, harass women secretaries and women pedestrians, do a mediocre job at my work, behave obnoxiously towards my neighbours, litter during picnics, etc. So, where is my Arabism, Islamism, patriotism, allegiance, belonging, identity? (At best in disarray and confusion).

Gibran is right. We are ready to kill in defence of our fezzes, but not in defence of more important matters.

But Gibran is also right in portraying the Arab culture of his day, and, by extension, that of ours, as one which is more of a consumer than a contributor or creator. Like that of the fez-wearing, fez-jealous, and fez-zealous Syrian intellectual, our culture of today is essentially a parasitic, mimicking culture. Where are our industries? Where are the factories which invent, not assemble? Where are the factories which produce something original and new, not an inferior copy of something else?

When I was a visiting fellow at The Newberry Library in Chicago in the summer of 1987, I had lunch with the then academic vice-president. By way of starting the conversation, he asked what we drank in our country at lunch.

I said Pepsi or Seven Up (Coca Cola had not yet found its way into the country). He asked, "Why? Why do people have to drink Pepsi and Seven Up? Is it hard for you to come up with a drink of your own?" I'll spare you the answer I gave him.

But the matter goes beyond Pepsi and clothes. Where do we stand in relation to science, to thought, to the various disciplines (sociology, biology, ecology, geology, etc.)? We are consumers, we are mimickers. How much original research (something with which many of us are obsessed these days) is being conducted in our part of the world? What is our contribution to today's global culture?

Some may say that we do have some promising, or even excellent, industries? Well, how many? Some may say we do have some authentic research? Well, how much? What is the percentage of summarising and copying to that of producing original thoughts?

One does not want to go as far as some of the ultra-patriots, enthusiasts, chauvinists and isolationists among us (and Gibran may be a bit romantically guilty in this sense) to argue that we should invent our clothes, our technology, our food, our everything. This conception, though attractive in principle, may be quite faulty and unhealthy. After all, we are part and parcel of a human, global culture. Some cultures have specialised in making clothes, others in technology, others in food, etc. Cultures complement and need each other. There may be no country whatsoever in today's world which is fully self-sufficient. So why should we?

This does not mean, however, that we should go to the other extreme and be absolute recipients, consumers and copiers. We need to contribute to the global culture of today — with clothes, with food, with technology, with science, with thought, with moral values, etc. We need to contribute with something. We want to be partners. We have contributed greatly in the past, and we can do it again. Let's focus on our strengths, our potential, our capabilities and excel.

It is a mistake to claim, as some do, that we have to contribute everything. If we focus on everything, we may end up doing nothing.

Free trade does not create more jobs, it creates better jobs

By James K. Glassman

WASHINGTON

President Bill Clinton is to

issue a report card on the

first three years of the North

American Free Trade

Agreement, or NAFTA. He

will say it has been a suc-

cess because U.S. exports

have risen despite Mexico's

terrible financial crisis.

Opponents will say it has

been a failure because the

U.S. trade deficit has

widened and we Americans

have lost jobs. And we will

be back to a bloody fight.

NAFTA will not be

repealed, but if it is per-

ceived as a flop, it will jeop-

ardise the extension of lib-

eralised trade to Chile, the rest

of Latin America and Asia.

In order to win agree-

ments with those countries,

President Clinton needs

"fast track" negotiating

authority, so Congress can-

not delay the deals or add

crippling amendments. Fast

track is vital, but to get it,

advocates in the White

House and Congress are

going to have to stop mak-

ing the wrong arguments on

behalf of more open trade.

The worst is that free trade

creates jobs. It does not, but

it does do something far bet-

ter. It creates wealth.

Jobs are not an end in

themselves. They are the

price we pay for what we

really want. Or as Adam

Smith put it in 1776,

"Consumption is the sole

end and purpose of all pro-

duction." Imports are the cost.

This is a tough idea for

Americans to grasp. But

consider an anecdote told in

the *Cato Journal* by Jerry

Jordan, president of the

Federal Reserve Bank of

Cleveland.

Mr. Jordan describes a

U.S. businessman visiting

China a few years ago. The

American came upon a team

of 100 workers building a

dam with shovels. He com-

mented to a local official

that, with an earthmoving

machine, a single worker

could build the dam in an

afternoon.

The official replied, "Yes,

but think of all the unem-

ployment that would cre-

ate."

"Oh," said the business-

man. "I thought you were

building a dam. If it's your

job to create, then take

away their shovels and give

them spoons."

Work is what we need to

do in order to acquire things

to live well. Free trade helps

us get those things more

cheaply because it allows

many more producers to sell

them to us — and because it

frees us to concentrate on

the work we do best.

Say, for example, that a

country is full of brilliant

electronic engineers but that

it won't allow any textile

imports across its borders.

The engineers would have

to sew their own shirts to

wear. They would have less

time for electronics and the

country would be poorer for

it.

What about a trade

deficit? Imagine that the

country that sells the shirts

never buys the electronics.

Instead, it takes back little

pieces of paper called dol-

lars. That does not sound

like such a bad deal for the

electronics-specialising

country: They send us

shirts, we send them

promises.

But the protectionist

impulse has always been

strong in America. In Adam

Smith's words: "In a mer-

cantalist or protectionist sys-

tem, the interest of the con-

sumer is almost constantly

sacrificed to that of the pro-

ducer." That's because pro-

ducers — and their union

allies — don't like competi-

tion, and they enlist the aid

of politicians to keep it up.

To resist the protectionist

impulse, the United States

has needed, tough, princi-

pled presidents.

Unfortunately, Mr. Clinton

is preoccupied (he almost

lost NAFTA and the World

Trade Organisation for the

same reason). He also wants

his vice president, Al Gore,

to succeed him — and Mr.

Gore's likely Democratic foe,

House Majority Leader

Dick Gephardt, is a fierce

opponent of extending the

NAFTA idea.

A nervous Clinton admin-

istration asked representa-

tive Bill Archer, the House

Ways and Means chairman,

to put off consideration of

fast track until September.

Mr. Archer had no choice

but to delay. He assured me

recently that "fast track isn't

dead." Maybe not, but the

threats are ominous.

They will grow worse.

The president's report, I'm

afraid, will only highlight

the errors made by NAFTA

advocates.

"Free trade does not create

jobs," writes the Stanford

University economist

Melvin Krauss in "How

Nations Grow Rich," his

excellent new book. Instead,

"it creates income for the

community by reallocating

jobs and capital from lower-

productivity to higher-pro-

ductivity sectors of the

economy."

Free trade gives us not

more jobs but better jobs.

It may kill jobs in the textile

industry, which is labour

intensive, but breed new

jobs in electronics.

Concede the losses: they

are part of the creative

destruction that leads to a

stronger economy. The

Labour Department has

declared 125,000 job-losing

Americans eligible for spe-

cial NAFTA aid, including

636 workers at a toilet paper

plant in Memphis,

Tennessee. Through such

events, the market is telling

us it is more efficient for

some other country to make

our toilet paper.

But it is sheer lunacy to

argue that, on balance, free

trade hasn't made the

United States richer. In the

years since NAFTA and the

WTO were established, our

unprecedented economic

boom has only accelerated.

Gross domestic product is

rising at an annual rate of

4.1 per cent. Unemployment

is just 4.8 per cent.

"There can be no doubt,"

writes Mr. Krauss, "that the

prosperity of the industrial

nations since World War II

has been due largely to

global specialisation and

interdependence."

Exactly. That is why we

trade. And that is why our

prosperity is at stake if —

out of cowardice, ignorance

and cynicism — Congress

and the president decide

now to retreat.

Washington Post

American economic strength has its blemishes

By Thomas L. Friedman

DENVER

Sure, America's Group of Seven

allies were grumbling a bit

in Denver over what they

considered excessive brag-

ging by President Bill

Clinton about how

"America's economy is the

healthiest in a generation

and the strongest in the

world." But I say let him

brag a little.

The fact is, he deserves

Society on the Move

Changes in spurts are still changes

As was expected a few more changes in government branches and agencies have either occurred or are imminent.

We start with former Chief Justice of the Court of First Instance Farouq Kilani who is said to be the strongest among the candidates for appointment to head the Higher Court of Justice. Mr. Kilani, who has been in private practice the last several years, is graduate of Cairo University School of Law and has written several books on penal procedures. The official announcement, to be made by the Judicial Council, is expected this coming week.

GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF IT: Mohammad Naji Amayreh, former advisor at the prime ministry, is taking his case to His Majesty King Hussein. Appointed to his post only last year, Mr. Amayreh was dismissed last week and is trying to find out why. "I don't know of any enemies," he says. According to Mr. Amayreh, when he had differences in opinion with the previous government, he was not fired. He did give an interview recently to Ad Dustour daily which centred on a hypothetical line of questioning. Responding to one such query — What ministry would he choose if he were asked to be minister? — Mr. Amayreh named the Ministry of Rural and Municipal Affairs and the Environment. He does not believe that the interview would have been cause for his dismissal nor does he think that the current minister took offence. Meanwhile, Mr. Amayreh, who was once secretary general of the Ministry of Culture, says he is going back to journalism. He is already a columnist for the new Arabic daily Arab Al Yom. It was in one of his columns that he lamented his dismissal as unfair and that he was appealing to the King for justice.

CHANGING ATMOSPHERES: For those who may have thought there was something cloudy behind the retirement of Department of Meteorology Director General Amin Qarra'een, for Dr. Qarra'een it was clear as day. He wanted to go back to teaching, he says. Although he used to be a part-time lecturer at both the University of Jordan and Hashimiyeh University while working at the department, he is looking into moving to one of the private universities. Educated in the U.K., Dr. Qarra'een has a B.Sc. in engineering meteorology and physics from Reading University, an M.Sc. in atmospheric physics from Imperial College of the University of London, and a Ph.D. in meteorology and physics from Edinburgh University in Scotland. Dr. Amin took over the directorship of the Department of Meteorology more than two years ago. He is succeeded by his deputy, Haidam Shair, for 28 years ago, at University of Jordan, in BSc in science in 1969, also attended courses at Reading and in Toulouse and European Meteorology Centre based in London.

SOUTH-BOUND? Over at the Jordan Valley Authority Secretary General Duraid Mahasneh is tipped for a change. Before taking the reins of the JVA, Dr. Mahasneh headed the Aqaba Ports Corporation. It appears he may be headed back to the environs of the seaside resort.

NORTH-BOUND: The ESCWA move from Amman to Beirut will take place in October. But some staff, such as security and communications teams, will head to the Lebanese capital to prepare for the move. A total of 164 international staff will stay on with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. The number of staff staying behind total 106 local staff. The ESCWA Personnel Department has already begun a project to provide job searching training courses to help the staff secure other employment. The department has sent out C.V.s to various government and non-governmental organisations in Jordan. In addition, ESCWA will bring a selection team to interview members of the local staff as possible candidates for United Nations peace-keeping work. Of the large team that is moving to Beirut, 12 are Jordanians. They are Vera Azar, Omar Tougan, Bassam Anani, Taher Mousa, Abeer Fahoum, Said Haratqa, Issa Toubbeh, Badr Huirzallah, Mohammad Gubir, Omar Joudah, Ahmad Hammouda, and Amal Dajani.

KEEPING ABREAST: Here from Australia is that country's leader of the opposition and of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party Kim Christian Beazley. Mr. Beazley has served in the Federal Parliament since 1980. Several times a minister during the early 80s and 90s, Mr. Beazley has served as minister for Aviation, Defence (the youngest ever), special minister of State, Transport and Communications, Finance, and Employment Education and Training. A graduate of the University of Western Australia and Oxford, he holds a masters degree in arts and philosophy. His visit to the Jordan is one leg of a tour that started in Hong Kong, continues on to Israel and Great Britain where he will meet with British Prime Minister Tony Blair. While in Jordan for only two days, Mr. Beazley met with HRH Crown Prince Hassan. He has a keen interest in the Middle East as he recognises the region's potential as well as its complexities. Australian Ambassador in Amman Merry Wickes hosted a reception for Mr. Beazley, who had an opportunity to meet with a former prime minister, senior government officials, academics and established members of the business community. The Jordanian's came away impressed by Mr. Beazley's knowledge of Middle East politics as well as Labour Party politics in general. While in Israel, Mr. Beazley will visit the Australian athletes who were injured when a bridge collapsed during the opening ceremony of the Maccabiah Games.

OFFICER ON DECK: The United States embassy has a new Chief of the Military Assistance Programme and Defence Attache. He is Colonel David J. Anthony, who arrived in Amman last week just in time for the embassy's July 4th, Independence Day, celebrations. Col. Anthony succeeds Col. Michael Shaw who returned to Washington, D.C. and could be slated later to head for U.S. Central Command in Florida. Prior to his arrival in Jordan, Col. Anthony was deputy director for operations of the Defence Security. Before that, from 1991 to 1993, he was defence and army attaché in Damascus. His other assignments have included: assistant to the director of the Army Staff, the Pentagon; chief of plans and the Strategy Branch, also at the Pentagon; political military plans officer, at the Joint Staff; and representative to Presidential Peace Envoy Philip Habib in Lebanon from 1983-1984. Col. Anthony received his bachelor's degree in journalism from Temple University in Philadelphia. He received his masters in area studies from the Naval Postgraduate School, in Monterey, California.

Jennifer Hamarneh



Proper Jordanian consumerism is simpler than you think!

WITH THE huge economic boom that Jordan is going through, and since there is much more of it coming our way after America started the 'special regional development piggy bank' full of enough coins to move one of its embassies from one city to another, yet it is all ours, it pains me to see Jordanians behave as if totally lost customers in their own country!

To put a finger on the problem, Jordan has already become a good consumer market while Jordanians are not good consumers yet. Even though I am not trying to endorse wasting valuable public time until the nation comes round, I don't have to, it is ridiculous for the country to be way ahead of its own people! This really hurts deep down inside, and if you don't believe me, may the lord, Balfour, strike me dead if I lie!

Because of the pain I am experiencing, I feel obliged to explain the basic concept of consumerism in order to relieve my conscience of this specific heavy burden, claim that I am playing my part in the speedy development of the Kingdom and last but not least, because I have nothing else to do.

Since consumerism has to do with money given away in return for a product, it is detrimental to understand the concept of 'product' before we can become good consumers. Some people do not realise that there was life in Jordan before the age of currency, or lately since that has become a rare commodity, credit.

But there was! Tofaha used to plant cucumbers to eat them; not to sell them. Atwan, the shepherd, used to drool after 'Lih' (The pure fat sac following a real Jordanian sheep wherever it goes) not of a juicy bank account.

Yes, Abu Farweh, the sheep, was no more than a walking Mansaf and a fluffy floor rug, and Atwan was the one who consumed it, then laid down on it! Later in life, things happened rapidly. Tofaha, in a moment of true pregnancy, craved a fistful of Mansaf, while Atwan, who was given a jug of Arak in return for a few sips of Abu Farweh's milk (while wondering about in Wadi Rum) wanted anything but Mansaf for mezza.

Not realising it then, Tofaha and Atwan made an exchange. This simple and innocent act turned into a habit! Hell broke loose after that and today it is difficult to tell what belongs to Atwan, what belongs to Tofaha, and whether it was Atwan who had made Tofaha pregnant in the first place!

It is of value to realise that a product then was produced for its own 'proper use'. What that means is, when Hilweh, started sewing her hand-made dress when she was a young girl on the verge of puberty, she made it in order to wear on her wedding. The 'proper use' of a dress, is to wear, even if it was to be worn only once!

This leads me to have to explain the 'value of use' concept even though I don't really want to. If Hilweh hadn't been a total idiot, she would have sewed many dresses to wear on a daily basis instead of that one wedding dress, which would have kept her smell low, and as a result, she would have gotten married instead of becoming a spinster, but this is way off our subject.

If she had made a dress to wear on a daily basis, she would have made more use of it. Thus its 'value of use' would have been much higher than that of the Ministry of Higher Education. However, spinster or not, Hilweh did not go strolling down Gardens Street for the dress, neither did she make it to sell in the Zarqa 'baleh' market before the market was totally burnt down. The moral of the story is that I for one understand the 'value of use' of a product, and because of that, it pains me to see Jordanians today buy beer instead of Arak.

May God bless Atwan's wandering soul, but if you compare the amount of time that beer stays with you in comparison to Arak, the performance and price of both products, you've got to be as much of an idiot as Hilweh if you ever buy another bottle of beer!

Now, now.. if you don't drink, may I inform you that there remains a lesson for you concerning the 'proper use' of a product!!! The proper use of a shoe for one.. is footwear. While you're at it, please pass this information to the government!

Wife or concubine? A question of choice

BEIJING (AFP) — Concubines are becoming a phenomenon largely accepted in China's cities even if traditional marriage remains the ideal for the majority of Chinese, according to a survey published in the official press.

"64.8 per cent of people questioned said concubines were a way of life just like any other," said the survey, run by Beijing University's Centre for Sociological Research and the China Economic Times magazine.

"We are a long way from

the start of the 1980s when people believed concubines were something only for foreigners and found no end of excuses for checking on 'suspects' to catch them in the act," the magazine said Friday.

"At the moment even the Public Security Bureau has little interest in concubines," the weekly magazine added, without giving figures on the number of couples living in this way.

"People think it is about a choice of lifestyle and no longer interfere," in their

neighbours' lives, the article added.

Only 22 per cent, of which 8.7 per cent were elderly and 12.6 per cent were less educated men and women, said unmarried partners were had for marriage, the article added.

Some 18.2 per cent of those questioned thought live-in partners were a formula which could solve economic problems, with marriage ceremonies bringing excessive costs.

For 22.4 per cent marital cohabitation was a "trial

marriage" and 20.1 per cent thought it answered "psychological and physiological needs" for "using up that youthful excess of energy."

Those most in favour of cohabitation were students, 73.5 per cent of whom supported the idea, and independent workers, 66 per cent of whom were in favour.

Some 23.5 per cent of those questioned thought on the other hand that it was just an excuse for "avoiding responsibilities."

A majority of Chinese liv-

ing with unmarried partners want to have a "stable" family, the survey showed.

"These people, unable to stop rapid changes in society, are bringing their hopes (for stability) to this small social unit, which we know as the family," the magazine said.

Some 65.6 per cent of city-dwellers, dividing equally into men and women, dream of a "traditional marriage," this percentage is higher for management, at 42 per cent, than workers and employees, at 15 per

cent for both.

These are the "contradictions of (modern) life," the China Economic Times said, which many of those questioned consider "insoluble."

But the meaning of marriage has changed. For most "its role is no longer limited to reproducing descendants."

Some 1,000 people from different social categories were questioned for the poll, from which 987 gave replies.

London revives its Victorian loos for tourists

By Robert Woodward
Reuters

LONDON — To many Londoners, the capital's public toilets are a symbol of an imperial past when nothing was too grand if it would add to the comfort of an Englishman.

The conveniences that dotted the capital were renowned for their fittings of gleaming white porcelain, polished brass taps and solid wooden doors.

Often there was an attendant to dust down a visitor's jacket and offer towels before ushering him out of an establishment fit for a monarch.

After the first underground public lavatory was opened in 1855, for men only, one witness was moved to declaim a poem in front of Queen Victoria in praise of Thomas Crapper, British inventor of the flush toilet.

"Down gleaming walls of porcelain flows the sluice, that out of sight decants the kidney juice on Crapper's rocket, with rapturous ease men's cares shall flow away, when seated at convenience."

But just as the empire

went down the pan in the decades after World War II, so the loos of London fell into disrepair and disrepute.

Toilets became pick-up joints neglected by local councils and their use as pick-up joints for homosexuals and prostitutes meant Londoners preferred to hold out for more salubrious surroundings whatever the discomfort.

Toilets — cosy, built to last and often in prime positions — were turned into tanning parlours, billiard halls and art galleries, or closed down by penny-pinching councils.

Tourists were forced to use toilets in pubs — when they were open — or cafes and restaurants, but staff usually demanded the purchase of food and drink first.

Dozens and maybe hundreds of toilets were lost before a revival began in the late 1980s, stemming from both historical interest and a realisation that the growing numbers of tourists visiting London had to "go" somewhere.

Westminster Council, which covers much of Central London, has made a great effort to improve

cleanliness and access to public toilets and has earned the praise of one well-connected visitor — Russia's Ambassador Anatoly Adamishin.

"Where can you find a country with so many public toilets? And so well maintained, too. British lavatories are not just spotlessly clean, they are cosy," he said in a newspaper article last month.

"I, for one, have never seen anywhere else boasting tiled walls with mosaics... In others there are lithographic prints in fine frames, and potted plants in others pleasant music playing."

Loos with a welcome for regulars

The British Tourist Authority has lent a hand by promoting Loo of the Year Awards, reminiscent of the 1960s when London's toilets had a dedicated guide.

The 1965 Good Loo Guide graded the establishments — three stars represented unbeatable value, two stars was "worth travelling out of your way to experience."

The guide's author was

particularly pleased with the West London Air Terminal — "If you really love the girl, take her here" — and the Sloane Square lavatories where the attendants said they "always have a welcome for our regular gentlemen."

Nowadays, attendants are still seen in some underground toilets but they are there for cleaning and security, not for conversation.

However, the five-star Savoy Hotel has not only uniformed staff, ready to chat about the cricket or weather while brushing you down, but urinals with splash-back glass guards and armchairs for the weary.

Any tourist with Chutzpah can use the Savoy loos which are meant to be for hotel guests only and free. Many public conveniences in London charge a small fee while the grand, ground floor toilets at Harrods Store in Knightsbridge charge a hefty fee of one pound.

London still has fewer public toilets per person than any other city in Britain but there is little doubt that standards are improving and a tourist is rarely more than a few minutes from relief.

Women's toilets are still less easy to find than men's for historical reasons — in Victorian times women were not supposed to need to "go" as often as men.

In 1994, a British member of parliament tried but failed to push through a bill which would have required councils to provide equal facilities for men and women. But many toilets now have baby changing rooms, some even in the men's area.

Councils have tried to satisfy growing demand by installing one-person "superloos" on strategic street corners, but the interested tourist will want to see the full range London can offer.

Don't miss Harrods or the Savoy

The starting point of any tour would have to be the toilets at Westbourne Grove Underground Railway Station, for many the best public loos in the world. Built in 1993 and with a flat, fan-ning roof, it is as close to an architectural masterpiece as any toilet.

Then on to Paddington Station, where £1 million was spent on a brilliantly-lit

edifice for rail travellers. It's only a short walk to Paddington Street, a Loo of the Year Award winner in 1995 and the jewel in Westminster's crown with its potted plants and coat hooks on the back of cubicle doors.

Harrods or the Savoy, while not strictly public toilets, would reveal the upper end of the market but a trip to Leicester Square or the Royal Courts of Justice show Victorian toilets in their more basic form.

Final stop could be the toilets on Victoria embankment, favourite of Mr. Adamishin. The truly adventurous could visit Tottenham Hale Station in North London and St. George's Hospital in Tooting, South London, but the famous Covent Garden toilets with their fresh flowers and chatty attendants are temporarily closed for refurbishment.

But tourists should beware of continuing their interest after dark. British policemen traditionally take a keen interest in the activities of those frequenting public toilets in London's great parks once the sun has gone down.

The slow ones only

By Jean-Claude Elias

THIS MAY come as a shock to those in complete, unconditional admiration of Pentium personal computers but I find the machines terribly slow. This is neither a joke nor a hidden technicality. I really think those PCs are too slow.

Whatever the reason we put a PC to work for, we always expect it to respond with a certain speed. If for instance one is using it to record and process digital music, the performance of the machine is considered as satisfactory if the music is well recorded, its quality preserved, and if it is played back smoothly, without glitches, without distortion and at the correct playback speed. Old PCs couldn't play digital music correctly for the hard disk, among other elements, couldn't sustain the high transfer rates such music requires. On such dinosaurian systems music used to sound broken, unnatural, like speech on a bad long distance telephone connection. Now most Pentium-based systems can replay hi-fi stereo tracks directly from the hard disk, and with true CD quality.

The above is one example of tasks that PCs accomplish with pleasing result. There are of course countless others that also work fine and that we use everyday, like word processing, accounting, E-mail, and so forth. There is, however, a whole range of applications that are still painful, very slow to process even with the fastest, most powerful Pentium processor.

Downloading graphics and quality images or large files on the Internet, working on three-dimensional (3D) animation, printing high resolution colours on ink-jet printers and recording and processing multitrack digital music have one thing in common — they make you wait forever before they are done. Figures are convincing: A two million-character file (a quite ordinary size) will take more than half an hour to download on the Internet. An A4-size photo-like picture will make your ink-jet printer struggle for more than 20 minutes before you can admire the print-out, if you asked for the highest possible resolution. Rendering, a process familiar to those involved in 3D animation and advertising, can take hours, literally. Finally multitrack recording of music may just not function at all on your beloved Pentium, unless its clock rate is 166 MHz



at least and you beef it up with a huge hard disk (2 MB and above), and a lot of memory (32 MB and more).

The above have now become very common tasks and do not belong to any science fiction world. A large proportion of PCs is purchased precisely to accomplish them. Users need much faster machines than what is currently available on the market. Vendors and manufacturers try to impress if not to convince clients by bombarding them with figures that do not really translate into real advantages to them. Do you really care if your car's engine rotates at 4,000 or 10,000 rpm (revolutions per minute)? No, you are rather interested to know if it can take you to Aqaba in three, four, or ten hours. That is how we should evaluate computers performance, not in MHz and MB.

Quality colour printing, something we couldn't dream of in the eighties, is becoming more and more popular, particularly now that the price of the hardware has dropped to consumer levels. Manufacturers should find a way to speed up the printing process. We need devices ten to twenty times faster at least. To be honest with the industry, there is a way to configure a "super" PC so that it reaches the power I am talking about. However it would cost JD15,000 and more and therefore would not be called a "personal" machine anymore.

It is probably only a matter of a few years before we get the PCs we are dreaming of today — only to start dreaming of others again.

New times, new people, new ideas and new ideologies

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

HAVING BLOWN up my dear friend's computer into bits some weeks ago, and having gotten confused by the contradictions of daily life, I turned to the Jordan Times' huge computer for ideas, inspiration and words.

Words are quite plentiful here. In fact, besides pictures, words are about the only other thing available on the J.T.'s huge computer.

On this computer, you tend to find several items of international news, plus those articles that others have written in English for the English-reading community in Jordan.

Yet, because this is not a very numerous community, public perception is that it is generally not what you read and write in the English papers in the Arabic-speaking world that will make a difference to your life in Jordan, but what you read and write in Arabic that will most likely be noticed, and maybe even reacted to.

This is reasonable because this is an Arab country after all. And it is partly because of this that the Jordan Times has only 12 pages on weekdays.

Hence the question: Why write in English at all? The simplest and most obvious answer is that because the reading is done by foreigners and English educated Jordanians: Jordanians whose opinions often tend to make a difference. And foreigners who, reason dictates, are bound to be more open to themes and debates similar to those in their own part of the world.

Therefore, and if all this is true, a favourite topic in the local English press should be one which is less prominent, even though present, in the Arabic press.

One such topic is that of discrimination against women in Jordan. Writers in our English press never cease to point out that women in Jordan are disenfranchised and treated as second class citizens.

While this may be true, we have to acknowledge that



Jordan is a developing Third World country where the issue should be that some of us do not only discriminate against women, but against every single other person we meet, male or female.

So, maybe, the labels used to describe people and organisations in the West may not work in our midst. And maybe those who are using such labels should reexamine their arguments.

The point here is that we need to develop our own indigenous debate on discrimination because our present lack of such an ideology is killing off our creative spirits.

This should be talked about, and candidates standing for seats at the general elections should be made to talk about them.

Meanwhile, while we search for those people who can be the role-models we seek, the chosen ones who run our lives can be excluded:

We park illegally because we see those officials doing the same thing.

We speed because we see cars with official number-plates speeding past us.

We stop caring because we see those officials not caring...etc.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, July 17, 1997

3:30	Holy Koran
3:35	French Programmes
4:05	Hey Dad
4:30	He Shoots He Scores
5:15	Varieties
6:10	French Programmes
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	French Programme
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Parenthood
8:00	Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
8:30	Documentary (Submarines)
9:10	Kung Fu — The Legend Continues
10:00	News In English
10:30	Movie
12:00	Taratata

Friday, July 18, 1997

2:00	Holy Koran
2:05	Leo The Lion — Cartoon
2:30	Cartoons
3:00	French Programmes
4:00	Neighbours
4:30	NBA
6:10	French Film
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	French Programme
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Family Matters
8:00	The Health Show
8:30	Hawkeye
9:10	500 Nations
10:00	News In English
10:30	Mini Series
12:00	Movie

Saturday, July 19, 1997

3:30	Holy Koran
3:35	French Programme
4:00	Neighbours
4:30	In The Wild (Doc.)
5:30	Blue Heelers
6:10	French Programmes
7:00	Le Journal
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Hanging' with Mr. Cooper
8:00	Magazine Zero One
8:30	Prism
9:10	Time Trax
10:00	News In English
10:30	MacGyver
11:15	Movie

Sunday, July 20, 1997

3:30	Holy Koran
3:35	French Programme
4:05	America's Home Video
4:30	Energy Express
5:15	American Chart Show
6:00	French Programmes
7:00	Le Journal
7:30	News Headlines

7:35	Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air (Comedy)
8:00	Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
8:30	National Geographic
9:10	Renegade
10:00	News In English
10:30	One West Walkiki
11:15	Sisters

Monday, July 21, 1997

3:30	Holy Koran
3:40	Spirou
4:05	Neighbours
4:30	Deep Water Haven
5:00	Ocean Girl
5:15	Nature By Profession
6:10	French Programmes
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	French Programme
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Murphy Brown
8:00	The Giant Nile
8:30	Babylon 5
9:10	Highlander
10:00	News In English
10:35	Law And Order
11:15	Homicide

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

3:00	Holy Koran
3:35	French Programmes
4:00	Super Sport Follie
4:30	Dog House
5:00	Square One TV
5:15	Album Show
6:10	French Programmes
7:00	Le Journal
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Coach
8:00	Tilt 23.5
8:30	Encounter
9:10	Nature Of Things (Documentary)
10:00	News In English
10:30	West Beach
11:15	Drug Wars

Wednesday, July 23, 1997

3:30	Holy Koran
3:35	French Programmes
4:05	Neighbours
4:30	Spell Binder
5:30	Forests Of The World
6:00	French Programmes
7:00	Le Journal
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Step By Step
8:00	Soldier's Diary
8:30	Challenges
9:10	Spencer For Hire
10:00	News In English
10:30	Land's End
11:15	American Gothic

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Mohammad A. Shugair

HOWLERS

PERFECT PAIRS

- He's a pill and she's a headache.
- She's a rag, a bone, and a bank of hair; he's a brag, a groan and tank of air.
- It's a nip-and-tuck marriage. He takes a nip, and she tucks him in.
- It's a 50-50 marriage. She signs the cheques; he signs the receipts.
- He's paunchy; she's punchy.
- They're a sparkling, shining couple. She sparkles with diamond; he shines in his seven-year old suit.



LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

- ** His heart is void of love.
Qalbuhu khaali minal hobb.
- ** She's the victim of his foolishness.
Innaha dahiyatu ghabaa'chi.
- ** I'm very upset about her.
Ana qaliq jiddan alayha.
- ** She's poor, miserable.
Innaha miskeenah baa'isah.
- ** She's at variance with him.
Innaha ala khilaf ma'ahu.
- ** She was touched to the quick.
Laqad jaraha ehsasaha.
- ** She was talking in a sad tone.
Kanat tatakallam benaghmaten hazeenah.
- ** I'll stand by her. It's my duty to do so.
Sawfa aqiff bejanibeha. Minal wajih an af'al thaalek.

JOKES

- OLD MAN: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself to stand here begging in the street."
- BEGGAR: "What do you want me to do? Open an office?"
- TEACHER: "What's a leap year?"
- JIM: "A year in which my mother gives birth to a baby."

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

STAMPS

1. What country issued the first postage stamp?
2. By what name is a stamp collector known?
3. What are demonetized stamps?
4. Where is Tannou Tourva?
5. Who originated the idea of the postage stamp?
6. Do any stamps picture Jesus Christ?
7. What is Albino Stamp?

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

THE BRIDAL WREATH. In ancient times in England, bride and bridegroom alike wore wreaths conserved specially for their use in church, and in the thirteenth century the bridal chaplet frequently consisted of ears of corn — signifying plenty. Rosemary was considered lucky in Shakespeare's day. "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance."

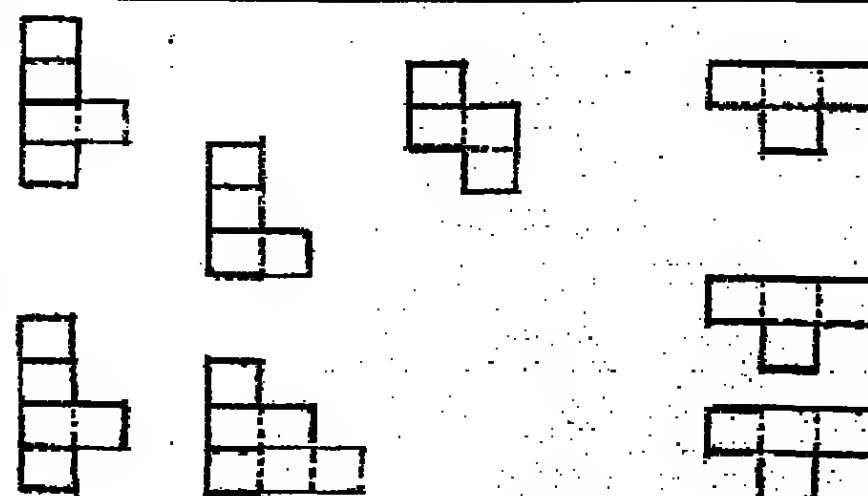
ORANGE BLOSSOM: These spotless blossoms, which betoken purity and innocence and are symbolical of a prosperous life, are supposed to have been first brought by pilgrims from the Holy Land, and thereby possess a religious significance.

PUZZLES

ALL SQUARE

COPY the right shapes below on to a sheet of stiff cardboard, cut them out, and try to form them into a square.

TRY to finish the square in five minutes.





Ballet aficionados and other Canadians are rushing for the last chance to see Canada's prima ballerina, Karen Kain, dance the swan song farewell tour of her 28-year career with the National Ballet of Canada (Reuter photo)

Canada's prima ballerina dances final tour

TORONTO (R) — People stood amid a deafening roar of clapping, screaming and whistling as the curtain opened and a diminutive figure swept out to receive the wild applause of Canadian ballet fans.

Ballet aficionados and others are rushing for the chance to see Canada's prima ballerina, Karen Kain, dance the swan song of her 28-year career with the National Ballet of Canada.

The slight, dark-haired dancer was reflective, and giggly at times, in discussing her years with the National Ballet, where she has been the principal dancer since 1970.

"I was talented and I worked hard but I was also pretty lucky," Kain, 46, told Reuters in a telephone interview from her farewell tour, which ends in October. "I wasn't that easy to work with but I had a huge passion for what I do."

She said she was looking forward to being released from the physical pain of performing every night. "I have a sense of relief that I don't have to perform at this level anymore, but I also have a lot of sadness about it because I love to do it. I just wish it didn't hurt so much."

Sweden's Drottningholm — a rare gem for opera lovers

By Abigail Schmetz
Reuter

STOCKHOLM — A queen ahead of her time, a murder and a chance discovery are all pieces in a puzzle explaining why Drottningholm Court Theatre is arguably the world's best-kept 18th century opera house.

Standing a stone's throw from the residence of the Swedish royal family on the bank of tranquil Lake Malaren near Stockholm, the theatre is a treasure trove holding secrets to opera's early days.

"It's one of the very few 18th century theatres that survived. It's a time capsule," Rodney Milnes, editor of Opera magazine, told Reuters.

A landmark in the opera world everything from the workings of the elaborate stage machinery and scenery down to the wallpaper is original, making Drottningholm an unusual gem among Europe's opera theatres.

The modest exterior of the theatre matches the pale, natural colours of the rooms surrounding the auditorium and contrasts with the bright green palace gardens nearby.

The theatre gives the audience a taste of opera in the 18th century with its dim lighting during performances, the smell of its old wooden floors and the hard, unmodernised benches.

Sweden's Queen Lovisa Ulrika, an intellectual and lover of the arts, ordered the building of Drottningholm, which was completed in 1766.

The heyday of Swedish theatre began in 1777 when Gustaf III, a driving force behind the development of opera in Sweden, inherited the palace. Under

der Gustaf a writer of operas himself, players performed foreign and Swedish works.

Star student saves the show

After Gustaf III was assassinated at a masquerade ball in 1792, theatrical life in Sweden came to a standstill. The castle household began to use the theatre for storage space.

Not until 1921 did Agne Beijer, a young researcher, stumble upon the theatre when he went there in search of a painting.

Drottningholm had been spared the renovations that most other theatres underwent in the 19th century.

"The theatre was left as it was. It had been ice cold in winter and that is the best way to preserve it," artistic director Per-Erik Ohm, told Reuters.

Under the direction of Beijer, Drottningholm was restored and reopened.

A storm-making machine and a cloud car players say performing at Drottningholm, where a team of stagehands can transform a city street scene to an interior in the blink of an eye, is a treat.

Backstage the theatre is equipped with trapdoors, a long wooden box that makes the sound of a rainstorm when moved back and forth, a wind-making machine and a wooden cloud with a bench on which singers are raised above the stage.

Experts say the theatre gives clues about opera performance and musical style of the day. Electric lights on the walls are among the few modernisations.

"There's no other way of performing in the theatre except how they would have performed in the 18th century — so typical to the

space, the fact that the orchestra is not in a pit but is level with the audience," Milnes said.

Brief season matches Scandinavian summer with the number of performances limited to 40 each year because of preservation concerns. Tickets are at a premium.

The season opened in early June and the last performance is on Aug. 24 this year.

Most of the works performed at Drottningholm are scheduled to fit the time period. This year's schedule includes Euridice by Jacopo Peri, considered the world's oldest opera, to commemorate 400 years of the art.

Some 30,000 people visit the theatre each year, many arriving at Drottningholm by boat, an hour-long ride from the centre of Stockholm.

"In the past tickets have been sold out half a year in advance. They are not sold out this year yet, but we're working on it," Ohm said.

"It's a unique place and a possibility to be moved back two centuries," he added.

Disney still churning out profits despite spate of protests

By Karen Lowe
Agence France Presse

LOS ANGELES — Broad-based attacks from angry Latinos, Greeks, southern Baptists, Arabs and trade unions have slid off the Walt Disney Company media marmoth like so many easy-over eggs off Teflon.

Disney is the most protested-against studio in Hollywood and yet, somehow, it remains one of the few entertainment studios that consistently makes money, its stock rising four quarters in a row.

Asked if the many protests — at least a dozen since 1994 — have had any effect on Disney, corporate spokesman Ken

Soviet film collection at stake in privatisation row

By Marina Lapenkova
Agence France Presse

MOSCOW — Russia's main television stations are waging a privatisation battle over Mosfilm, the country's biggest movie studio, though the real stakes are for control over its legendary film collection that made the Soviet Union a cinematic power.

The prolific library of 1,000 or more masterpieces is considered a treasure trove that would be any television programmer's ticket to record-breaking audiences and big ad money.

The Mosfilm collection includes most of the classic Soviet epics that go straight back to the 1920s. Lenin held that films played an important role in the development of Soviet society and so the industry thrived, breaking ground with dramatic photography and cinematic experiments.

The collection includes such greats as *The Strike* from 1924 and *Ivan The Terrible* from the early

1940s, both by Sergei Eisenstein. The *Cranes Are Flying*, the 1957 Mikhail Kalatozov film, and *War And Peace* from 1967 by Sergei Bondarchuk.

Though the breakdown of communism hurt the heavily subsidised movie industry, it brought an explosion in the number of television stations now vying for attention with lots of films.

Viewers can zap back and forth among the dozen or so stations to make their choice, but industry experts say the old Soviet era films, with their hint of nostalgia, are bigger "sellers" than the costly Hollywood productions.

"One hundred fifteen Soviet film hits were each shown 10 times in the last three years," said Daniyil Dandurey, editor-in-chief of the film review Cinema Art.

About 80 per cent of these came from Mosfilm, which since 1990 has held exclusive broadcasting rights to its collection in both ex-Soviet countries and abroad.

Four main Russian television stations — two private, NTV and TV-6, and two state-run, RTR and TV-Centre — have each launched official bids to invest in the old Soviet cinematic giant since the country switched to a market economy.

Mosfilm is scheduled to go public by selling off 49 per cent of its capital to the investor of its choice, who must in turn be approved by the government.

Once nicknamed "Hollywood On The Moskva," the studio produced 60 films a year in its Soviet heyday after Lenin's blessing brought film directors generous access to subsidies to finance their art.

Under communism, the serious lack of other leisure-time activities turned the people into great movie buffs. At a time when the average Soviet citizen saw 19 movies a year, his American counterpart saw only eight, experts said.

But "perestroika" brought financial trouble and spelled the downfall of what was

Europe's biggest film studio. Its 5,000 employees dropped down to 500 and last year the studio made only eight films.

The people trying to buy into Mosfilm are really looking to get our film collection," conceded Abdurakhman Mamulov, the studio's deputy director. With a one-minute ad during prime-time viewing hours paying up to \$30,000 on some channels, "our films could bring them \$180,000 for six minutes of advertisements," he said.

The investor that seems to hold the edge is the "most media" holding company of banker Vladimir Gussinsky, owner of two television stations specialising in national films, one of which is a satellite station, NTV Plus.

"Mr. Gussinsky is promising \$150 million over five years. With this, we could soon start producing about 20 full-length films a year," Mamulov said.

But some in film circles here are horrified by the whole project. "Selling

Mosfilm's collection would be like trying to privatise the Bolshoi Ballet or the Hermitage Museum," said Dandurey.

The government Cultural Department feels the films should remain the domain of the state and Russia's first television station, ORT, which is closely tied to the government, agrees, according to Dandurey who said ORT would probably benefit from such an arrangement.

The government is also considering the possibility of privatising Mosfilm but not its film collection, which would remain part of Russia's "national heritage." But Mamulov laments, "who would want us then?"

The fate of the studio, which is the largest site in Moscow after the Kremlin, should be decided by the end of the year.

"And if other ideas come forth between now and then, we'll consider them," Mamulov said.

Spice with everything

By Alex Perry
Agence France Presse

LONDON — A year ago, as they released their first single, for all the world knew the Spice Girls were merely the new flavour of the month, a flash in the pan. Today, their product range reads like that of a supermarket chain.

The British Patent Office recently announced that apart from records, posters and T-shirts, it had received more than 100 applications for trademarks bearing the Spice Girls moniker.

Soon you will be able to have Spice with everything, from shaving cream to tooth picks, from parrots and beers. There is even an application for a Spice Girls car.

The list reflects the phenomenal growth of a group of five British girls-next-door with attitude whose success has been a history of shattered records.

Since their debut *Wanna-be* was released this week

last year, the Spice Girls have sold 14.5 million copies of their debut album, 16.5 million singles, scored four number ones in Britain with their first four singles and beat the Beatles to have a debut album enter the American charts at number one.

Between them Emma Bunton (Baby Spice), 21, Geri Halliwell (Ginger Spice), 24, Mel Chisholm (Sporty Spice), 23, Mel Brown (Scary Spice), 21, and Victoria Adams (Posh Spice), 23, have amassed \$80 million in a year. Of that, their split is estimated to be around \$7 million each.

The group was singled out for praise for their "outstanding performance" at the annual general meeting of music giant EMI.

The unintended irony was that this is a group who undertake publicity tours the way other bands do concerts, and whose live shows can be counted on one hand.

The only standing ovation in the group's history was that received by their press officer at an awards ceremony earlier this year.

At the moment they are spreading their horizons. Their first film, *Spice: The Movie*, is being shot with a reported budget of 50 million pounds, and the BBC has asked them to front its Christmas television special.

And as only superstars can, they have stepped beyond the boundaries of showbusiness into politics — proclaiming Baroness Thatcher "the first Spice Girl" — into sport, with boyfriends such as David Beckham, Manchester United and England midfielder, and Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler, and into royalty, breaking all protocol by telling Prince Charles he was "very sexy" and pinching his bottom.

The question is whether, after such a phenomenal rise to fame, the Spice Girls can ever sustain their success. Already press stories

have appeared predicting the group's break up.

With a new album single planned for Oct. 6, a new album *Spice World* for Nov. 3, both recorded in a mobile studio in the girls' film set, and a world tour next year, their record company spokesman has no doubt.

"They are the biggest band in the world. They've replaced the royal family in Britain — every time they're on the front page of a paper it lifts sales by 10 per cent. They're just at the start of their careers."

The reason, he says, is that the Spice Girls have discovered a universal appeal. "Young girls love them, teenage girls want to be them, teenage boys want to be with them, and mums and dads and grandparents can sing along to some great pop tunes."

Apparently overcome by the awesome magnitude of their fame, he adds: "The essence of their success lies in the fact that they have touched a nerve deep in the

subconscious of women around the world: With their message of 'girl power' they are part of the lineage of the suffragette movement."

Gavin Reeve, editor of *Smash Hits*, the foremost British teenage pop magazine, is no less grandiose in his assessment.

"They have eclipsed all pop bands. They are the biggest in pop, possibly ever. They've achieved world domination."

He predicted the group would last five to six years, "but even if they do nothing, they will still be making millions every year."

"They're so mainstream. They're five confident, normal, approachable girls, next-door singing brilliantly catchy pop songs. All around the world that will ring true."

He sighs as if dreaming of missed opportunities: "It's so obvious."



The Spice Girls in action

Disney still churning out profits despite spate of protests

By Karen Lowe
Agence France Presse

LOS ANGELES — Broad-based attacks from angry Latinos, Greeks, southern Baptists, Arabs and trade unions have slid off the Walt Disney Company media marmoth like so many easy-over eggs off Teflon.

Disney is the most protested-against studio in Hollywood and yet, somehow, it remains one of the few entertainment studios that consistently makes money, its stock rising four quarters in a row.

Asked if the many protests — at least a dozen since 1994 — have had any effect on Disney, corporate spokesman Ken

Greene said: "Not that we're aware of."

"We have a terrific product and the world likes our product. We have record revenues. During the last quarter revenues were up \$5.5 billion," Greene added.

Nothing seems to shake the creators of Mickey Mouse, who have built an empire which now includes movie studios, cable television channels, book publishers, newspapers and broadcast stations.

And few entertainment insiders are willing to criticise Disney openly.

Film critic F. X. Feeney, who writes for the alternative newspaper *LA Weekly* and the Internet site "Mr. Showbiz," said, "I've observed that they

own the critics."

He pointed out that the popular morning television show *Good Morning America* will frequently give extensive, positive coverage of Disney projects. The show is on ABC, one of the major networks which is owned by Disney.

"If there were criticism, where would it get published?" Feeney asked. "There's this feeling," he added, "that it's like global warming. There's nothing you can do about it personally."

Disney has been both applauded and assailed for sticking to its policies and corporate decisions. When the company refused to yield to Beijing in a spat over the making of *Kundun* about Tibet's

Dalai Lama, it received kudos from the industry.

But it has also taken flak for what some groups see as ethnic insensitivity in the perceived stereotypes in its movies, failure to pay fair wages or hire more Latinos and blacks, and movement away from family values.

Labour unions have complained that workers in Haiti, Indonesia and China churn out high-profit stuffed animals in hazardous environments at miserly wages.

Last month, Southern Baptists called for a boycott of the company for its gay-friendly policies such as the disclosure that ABC sitcom actress Ellen Degeneres — both personally and in charac-

ter — was a lesbian.

The company also extended health benefits last year to same-sex partners of its employees in a move that put Disney in line with industry standards, but at odds with the religious right. Leaders of that movement claim family fare like *The Lion King*, *Aladdin* and *Pocahontas* are cover for offensive movies like the blood-soaked *Pulp Fiction* or *Trainspotting*, about heroin addiction, both released by Disney-owned Miramax.

Most recently, *Hercules*, which has only a passing resemblance to the ancient Greek myth, raised the hackles of Greece's top archaeologists who take their leg-

ends seriously.

Greece slapped down a request by Disney to give a world preview of the animated movie *Hercules* atop the hill that faces the famed Acropolis.

But Disney is not totally impervious to public criticism.

Last week, the company yanked the profanity-laced *Insane Clown Posse* Album after a mere six hours on store shelves, setting a recall record. And after the Baptist flap, it appointed a Jesuit priest to its board of directors.

"There is no corporation so big that they actually take things over," Feeney noted. "You just have to hope the oligarchic constructs eventually run out of gas."

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The willing contemplation of vice is vice

— Arabic proverb

No junk in our genes

By Henry Llewellyn

MOST OF the DNA, the genetic material in human cells, is meaningless rubbish. Our genes occupy only about three per cent of our DNA. The rest is junk. At least that is what used to be believed. But now scientists at the University of Sheffield, central England, have strong evidence that "junk" DNA is not really junk at all. The sequences of bases in "junk" DNA appear to be important in determining how the whole length on human and other DNA is folded up for storage in the nucleus, which in turn is important in determining how and when genes are expressed.

In the future, geneticists may be compelled to learn this second genetic language in order to carry out really advanced genetic engineering.

Genetic Code

The famous double spiral of DNA, that carries the genetic code in the nuclei of the cells in our bodies, is made up of two interlocked strands. Only one of those two strands contains genes. DNA is a long-chain molecule in which the links are the molecules called bases. There are four different bases in DNA, and it is the order in which they are arranged along the DNA molecule which is the genetic code.

When a gene is expressed and a protein is made, the sequence of bases from end to end of a gene is translated into an equivalent sequence of amino acids, which are the sub-units of the long-chain protein molecules out of which our bodies are built.

At one time it was thought that, if you went from one end of human DNA to the other, determining the sequences of all the bases along the way — which is more or less what the human genome project is doing — you would just find gene after gene. The human genome project scientists have so far only sequenced about one per cent of the human genome, as all the DNA in one of our cells is called.

However, it is already clear that in fact only about three per cent of it is made up of genes. The genes, probably about 100,000 of them, are dotted along our DNA, separated by much longer stretches of DNA in which the sequences of bases are meaningless. At least, they do not code for any amino acids.

Sequences of bases

It is this DNA which has been labelled "junk." But Dr. Chris Hunter of the Krebs Institute for Biomolecular Sciences at Sheffield University now thinks it does have a function. As he explains, he has evidence to support his

belief: "People used to think of DNA as being like a piece of string, having no preferred shape. But it's now apparent that it has a very definite preferred shape, and that shape depends upon the sequences of bases in the DNA. So there appears to be another code wrapped up in this molecule."

"That confers properties upon the sequences of bases, although they are meaningless in terms of the sequences of amino acids in proteins. If you took all the DNA from one of your cells and stretched it out, it would be about two metres long. And yet that two metres is packed up tightly like a ball of string inside a cell that's so small you cannot see it with the naked eye. What we believe is that the code of the junk DNA, determines how that ball of string is wrapped up."

Chris Hunter and his colleague Martin Packer have begun to show how sequences of bases in "junk" DNA determine how the part of the double spiral containing them is bent around. Among other things, the way in which the DNA is bent around into a ball determines which genes are on the surface of the ball and which are hidden away in the middle.

Says Chris Hunter: "The idea is that in this way the sequences of 'junk' DNA have a role in controlling which genes can be expressed. That is, proteins can be made according to their instructions because those instructions are easily accessible. And as a consequence the sequences of junk DNA also control which genes cannot be expressed. There are lots of other mechanisms of course, and some unwrap the ball so genes on the inside can be expressed, but we now believe that sequences in junk DNA are one of the primary means of controlling which genes are expressed, by controlling their wrapping and packaging."

At present Chris Hunter and Martin Packer are experimenting with short sequences of junk-type DNA and seeing how they make the DNA they are inserted into bend around. In this way, first by computer graphics and then by chemistry, they are learning the language of junk DNA. Once they know the language, then it may become possible to manipulate junk DNA in genetic engineering, perhaps in order to ensure that genes that have been moved into a new home are making the maximum amount of desired protein. That could be valuable in gene therapy to treat inherited diseases or cancer, or in biotechnology when genes are used to make useful products.

This seems likely to make genetic engineering even more complicated than it is already. But at least it is good news for the thousands of scientists busy sequencing the human genome. With 99 per cent of it still to sequence, they will be glad to know that they are not wasting 97 per cent of their time — London Press Service.

Tobacco smoke risky to babies of mothers older than 30

BALTIMORE (R) — Second-hand tobacco smoke poses a much greater risk to the pregnancies of non-smoking women over 30 than it does for younger women, according to a recent study.

The study, in the July issue of American Journal of Epidemiology, said hundreds of thousands of pregnancies a year in the United States may be affected by second-hand smoke.

"Given the proportions of older women giving birth in the United States and adult exposure to ETS (environmental tobacco smoke), it is possible that upwards of 300,000 pregnancies among non-smokers could be affected by ETS exposure, which has implications for the family and for the child's long-term growth and development," the study said.

The study was conducted by researchers at the Federal Centers for Disease Control who analysed data collected from more than 17,000 low-income women in Arizona and North Dakota.

It found that non-smoking women older than 30 who lived with a smoker had a much greater chance of delivering a premature or underweight baby than did non-smokers of the same age group who lived in a smoke-free home.

Babies born to the older

non-smoking women who were exposed to second-hand smoke weighed 90 grammes less on average at birth than babies born in smoke-free homes.

Birth weight is regarded as one indicator of overall infant health and development.

Links between second-hand smoke and pregnancy risks were weaker or absent among younger women or women who smoked, although older smokers exposed to second-hand smoke appeared to have greater risk of underweight babies than younger women in the same category.

There also was little difference noted in the weight of babies or the rate of premature births for women under 30 who did not smoke, regardless of whether they were exposed to second-hand smoke.

The study said factors behind the increased risk for older women could include the effect of airborne tobacco smoke on their placenta, which often work with less efficiency than those of younger women.

The article said factors unrelated to tobacco exposure may have affected the results. These include the accuracy of the women's reports of exposure to second-hand smoke, and certain social and economic factors.

First evidence of gene for obesity found in humans

LONDON (R) — A pair of obese cousins offer the first evidence that obesity can be blamed on a genetic mutation in people, British doctors reported.

The cousins have the same mutation in the gene that orders the body to produce leptin, a newly discovered hormone linked with body fat.

Although mice genetically engineered to become obese show genetic mutations, this is the first time a mutated gene has been found in obese humans. Sadaf Farooqi and colleagues at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge report.

"Despite considerable evidence that genetic factors contribute to human obesity, no mutations in any gene have been reported to cause obesity in humans," they wrote in a report in the science journal Nature.

But the two cousins, aged eight and two, offer strong clues.

Doctor Farooqi's group says the two come from a highly interbred family — their parents are first cousins, as were their grandparents.

"Although of normal weight at birth, both children suffered from severe, intractable obesity from an early age," they wrote.

Each child has two siblings of normal weight, and none of their parents are morbidly obese.

The eight-year-old weighs 86 kilograms and could hardly walk because she had so much body fat. Liposuction on her legs helped somewhat, Dr. Farooqi said.

The two-year-old weighs 29 kilograms and more than half his body weight is fat. Both children ate constantly from the time they were babies.

Dr. Farooqi's group found a single mutation in the gene for leptin in both children.

Checks showed both sets of parents carried one copy of the mutated gene while the children had two copies

'Psychotherapy helps unemployed get jobs'

LONDON (R) — Job-seekers who took part in group therapy were three times more likely to get jobs than those who just tried networking, British psychologists reported.

They said their study showed that changing the way people see the world could help them succeed.

Judith Proudfoot and colleagues at the University of London recruited 289 managers, administrators, technicians, salespeople or professionals who had been out of work for an average of two years.

Half were put into a programme aimed at helping them develop social and professional networks, while half joined groups given Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Writing in the Lancet medical journal, Dr. Proudfoot said the CBT group were much more likely to

get jobs.

They said 34 per cent of the CBT group had found full-time work four months later, while only 13 per cent of the other group did. Forty-eight per cent of the CBT group got part-time jobs while 28 per cent of the networking group did.

The findings "present another remarkable success for CBT," Chris McManus of Imperial College in London said in a commentary.

CBT involves changing a person's perception of the world. For example, depressed people tend to think they are to blame for their failures, even if they are not — and think that if they succeed, they are merely lucky.

CBT involves teaching them to think more realistically, helping them deal with the ups and downs of life better.

British women taking folic acid, but not enough

LONDON (R) — British women are starting to take vitamins needed to prevent birth defects, but not nearly soon or often enough, researchers said.

Most women still wait until after they know they are pregnant to take folic acid, which prevents spinal cord defects, the researchers reported.

This is weeks too late to help.

Jennifer Wild and colleagues at the Centre for Reproduction, Growth and Development at the University of Leeds interviewed 679 pregnant women getting their first check-up.

Just over 30 per cent said they had increased their intake of folic acid before they conceived, either with

supplements or by eating more foods rich in folates such as brussels sprouts and beans.

Writing in a letter to the Lancet medical journal, Dr. Wild said this was an improvement over years past and showed women were getting the message that folic acid prevents birth defects.

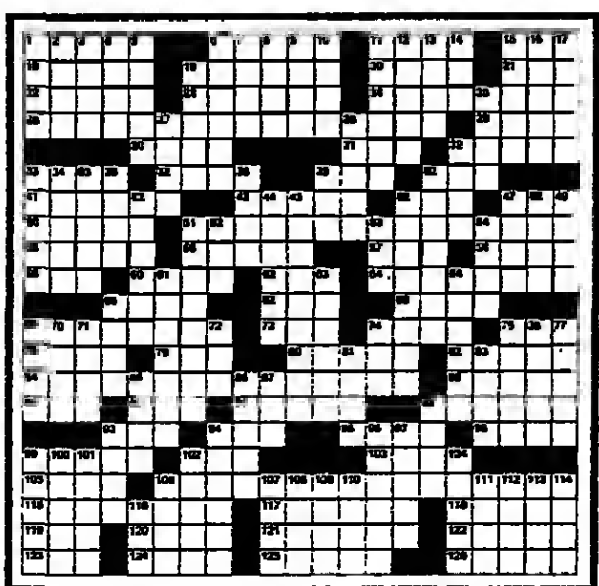
"However, 38.8 per cent of women interviewed started to take supplements only after conception, and most after the fifth week of pregnancy, which may well offer little or no protection," they wrote.

"Although there has been increased awareness of folic acid for prevention of neural-tube defects, there is still a long way to go."

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

PHYSICIAN, HEEL THYSELF
By Dorothy B. Martio

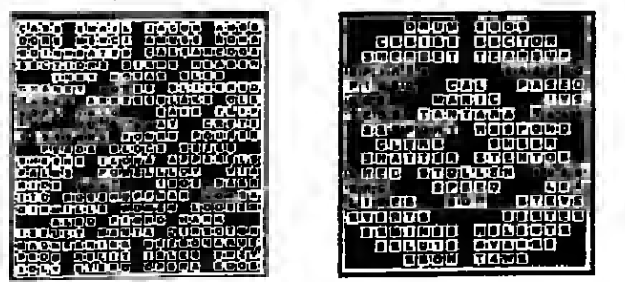
- ACROSS
1. Fall away
 2. Daughter of David
 3. Lay down
 4. Spinning top
 5. Deep disturbance
 6. Ancient Greek
 7. A head — in reverse
 8. Famous
 9. Money
 10. London lit
 11. Start of action
 12. James Bond
 13. Cheating
 14. Whistle judge
 15. A yodel
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Diagramless, 17x17
By Harold B. Counts

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SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



Last Week's Cryptograms
By Barbara J. Sapp

1. For her son's wedding, the groom's mother wore an apricot-colored skirt of silk pongee, and matching top.
 2. The broods about hard choice: Which doctor is our best bet?
 3. Highland shepherd would bring a heather to the heather to warm his usual sheared sheep.
 4. While gals seem to go giddy over kids' school pictures, guys don't even want to peek at them.
- CRYPTOGRAMS
1. UHHEA: OSHA ZNHO IQS OSVST
ZERRSVF BU VISA TSONQRO RRR VIBY
WTSORY WETOP. — By Barbara J. Sapp
2. TRIATSFGR CASA BIG FORTUNES OI RERG
WILD BNA USL PIKW OCPFSA NOGI IOB
RORPSE NODIG. — By Ed Haddock
3. TIM GOWS ZIPN BUT, MTI HIS WI FIRM
ORI MOV OGNOUT IG STA TONE, OW SIM
STA SAAHOKAN MTI NONGW SI WEOZ IPS
OFF RUTSI. — By E.C. Doyle
4. KID YAB YOB OK ART ISE EN KIR, WOI
BO, WRY BAD ERE. — By Frank N. Steh

Needle exchange helps limit AIDS — study

LONDON (R) — Controversial needle exchange programmes do seem to help prevent the spread of the HIV virus that causes AIDS, Australian researchers said.

The value of such programmes, which let addicts trade used syringes for clean ones, is hotly debated, not least because some critics believe they promote drug use.

But Susan Hurley and colleagues at the University of Melbourne said a review of studies on the incidence of HIV indicated they may work to a degree.

They reviewed 214 published studies on HIV prevalence in 81 cities in North America, Europe, Asia and the South Pacific. The researchers found HIV infection increased in 58 per cent of cities that did not have needle-exchange programmes and in 43 per cent of cities that did.

"A plausible explanation for this difference is that needle exchange programmes led to a reduction in HIV incidence among injecting drug users," they wrote in a report in the Lancet Medical Journal.

They said their findings were probably complicated by other AIDS-prevention programmes that some cities operated. A city that had a needle-exchange programme would almost certainly run other programmes aimed at stemming the spread of the deadly virus.

"Despite these limitations, our study provides evidence that needle-exchange programmes reduce the spread of HIV infection," they wrote.

U.S. health officials said that more than 14 million syringes were distributed last year through needle exchange programmes, many of them unofficial and unapproved.

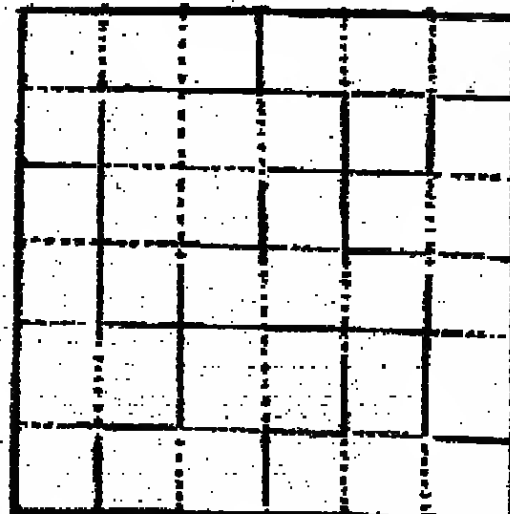
ANSWERS

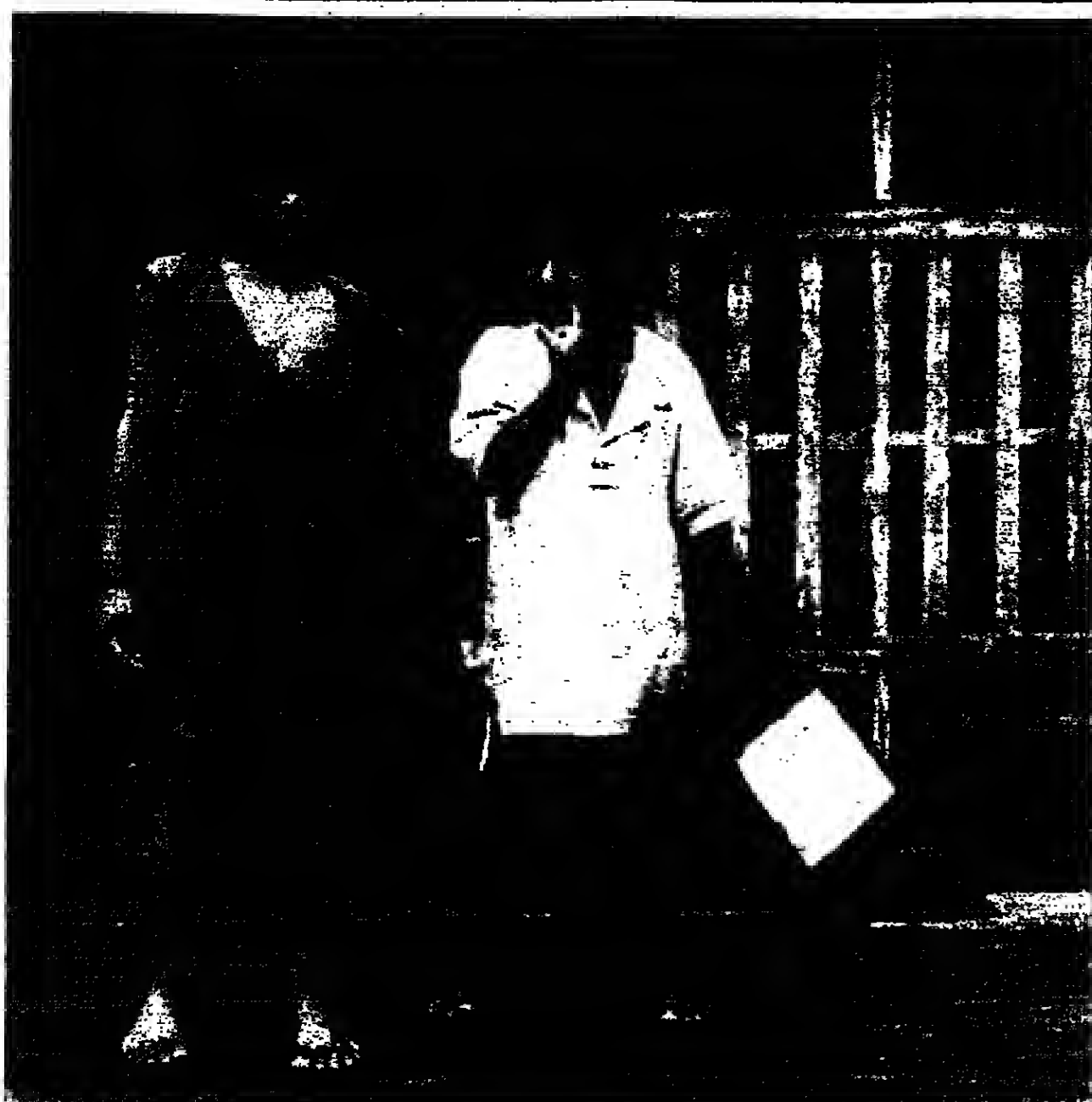
BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. England.
2. Philatelist.
3. Those no longer valid for postage.
4. Northern Mongolia.
5. Sir Rowland Hill (1795-1879).
6. Only one issued by Italy in 1923.
7. One which is embossed on an envelope but not inked, and therefore colourless.

PUZZLES

ALL SQUARE





Warao Indian children stand in front of a river house in the Orinoco Delta, Venezuela's poorest state, where foreign companies have arrived in the search for oil. Environmental groups are calling for oil companies to leave the delta, but residents say they want basic services like drinking water, education and health care, and if an oil company can provide them, so be it (Reuter photo)

Environmentalists protest planned gold mining in Venezuelan rain forest

By Bart Jones
The Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Though Sir Walter Raleigh and other European explorers searched fruitlessly for "El Dorado" — the legendary golden city — the precious metal was there all along in the Amazon jungle.

Buried in the earth of Venezuela's Imataca reserve may be one of Latin America's richest deposits. The government intends to allow mining companies to exploit the find. But the gold lies underneath rain forest — and environmentalists say that is also precious.

The Imataca rain forest reserve, twice the size of Switzerland at nearly 3.6 million hectares, sits in eastern Bolivar state. Last month, President Rafael Caldera authorised companies to extract gold and diamonds from nearly half the reserve.

The government formed a joint venture with a

Canadian-owned firm, Placer Dome, to exploit what may be the most prized site: Las Cristinas mine, on the edge of the reserve. Its estimated 280 tonnes of gold would make it Latin America's richest lode.

Mr. Caldera's decree opens Imataca to large-scale mining for the first time since the pristine rain forest was declared a national reserve in 1961.

"The plan is a total disaster," said Clemencia Rodner of the Audubon Society of Venezuela. "The forests will never be the same again."

Nearly two dozen local and international environmental groups plan to ask the supreme court to overturn Mr. Caldera's order, arguing that congressional approval is required.

The government argues that the decree should actually reduce environmental damage by controlling the thousands of illegal miners there now. The mineral poachers

knock down trees with high-pressure hoses, pollute rivers with mercury and cyanide, and create lawless boom towns rife with drugs, prostitution and violence.

The administration also says the mining would provide needed jobs and tax revenue for this country of 22 million.

Although Venezuela is blessed with rich natural resources, including the greatest proven oil reserves in the hemisphere, eight out of every 10 Venezuelans live in poverty.

Environmentalists "prefer that entire families die (of hunger) rather than have a single tree fall," government consultant Americo Martin said.

Venezuela, the world's top gold producer a century ago, currently produces 20 tonnes a year and is aiming to jump to 50 tonnes a year by 2000. That would put it back among the world's top 10. The quandary is how to

develop Imataca without damaging the rain forest, home to four indigenous tribes, including the Warao and Pemón.

Ms. Rodner says the Audubon Society isn't opposed to responsible mining, but contends the huge tracts set aside at Imataca should be reduced. She also wants the government to delay the mining until a planned mining agency and academy are in place to regulate and train the miners.

"There are a few of the mining companies that are good and decent. There are a lot that are extremely crooked and extremely bad, and they will not do a good job unless we stay on top of them," Ms. Rodner said.

She fears a calamity similar to that in neighbouring Guyana in 1995, when cyanide from the Canadian-owned Omai Gold Mines Ltd. spilled into two rivers, creating that country's worst environmental disaster.

Water — crisis or challenge?

By John Reston

ACROSS A landscape startlingly similar to parts of central southern Jordan, the world's largest water supply project is making rapid progress. Showing what can be accomplished with enough money, the Great Man-Made River Project is Libya's bold and far-sighted solution to the problem of rapidly diminishing water resources for the cities along its coast. With a willingness to spend up to \$20 billion or more, Libya plans to irrigate 1,550 square kilometres for agriculture as well as to ensure abundant water supply for all its cities.

Libya has always relied on wells dipping into the small aquifers in the coastal region and on dams designed to catch the flash floods unleashed by winter rains. These arrangements

worked well for the simpler society of the past, but the demands of modern urbanisation are more than the present systems can handle. For example, water extraction from the wells in the Tripoli region has been running six times faster than the rate at which rainfall has recharged the system. Increasing salinity shows that sea water was beginning to find its way into the aquifer. And the same thing was beginning to happen to the water supplies of the other major coastal cities. A water crisis was imminent.

Back in the 1950s, oil prospectors first began to identify the vast underground water reserves that lie beneath the Sahara in southern Libya. Studies showed an astonishing 3,500 cubic kilometres of water lying beneath the desert. The first attempts to exploit this water focused on setting up local irriga-

tion projects near the well heads, deep in the desert, and these "farms" continue to yield a harvest today. However, the rapid growth of population and industry in Libya's major coastal cities and the looming water problem elicited the decision to start a massive exploitation of this resource and bring its water to all the major cities of Libya.

Construction began in 1984, and so far Tripoli, Sirte and Benghazi have been connected to the system. The remaining work will focus on connecting up the presently separate western and eastern sections, on further development of the well fields, on extending the system to include Tobruk and on pushing forward with the irrigation programme. Tobruk is the only major coastal city still relying for water on its own backish wells.

The statistics of this project are huge. There is nothing comparable anywhere else in the world. When the well fields for the first and second phases are complete, they will be able to deliver 6.3 million tonnes of water per day into the system and more well fields are planned for phases three and four over the next ten to twenty years. Even if only a small percentage of the water in the aquifers proves to be recoverable, the supply is still sustainable for centuries.

To bring the project this far, a workforce of up to 12,000 men has toiled for thirteen years in the desert where the crushing summer heat tests men and machines to the limit. Government policy has made it a requirement that more and more Libyan employees, engineers, skilled and semi-skilled tradesmen and labourers should play a part

in the project and this trend will continue in the future. Libyans now form a significant percentage of the workforce and this helps ease the relatively high unemployment figures as well as enabling Libyans to acquire valuable skills and experience. Needless to say there is also a benefit to the economy as Libyan involvement diminishes the foreign exchange expenditure. The huge concrete pressure pipes are also manufactured in the country, largely with local materials and with the same beneficial advantages to the economy.

We live in a world whose population is increasing relentlessly. By an unfortunate paradox, the fastest increases often happen in the most arid regions, especially in the Middle East. Even without considering agriculture, the per capita demand for water in a modern city is also increasing rapidly, as everybody acquires the latest water-hungry domestic appliances, adding to the demands for drinking water and for sanitation.

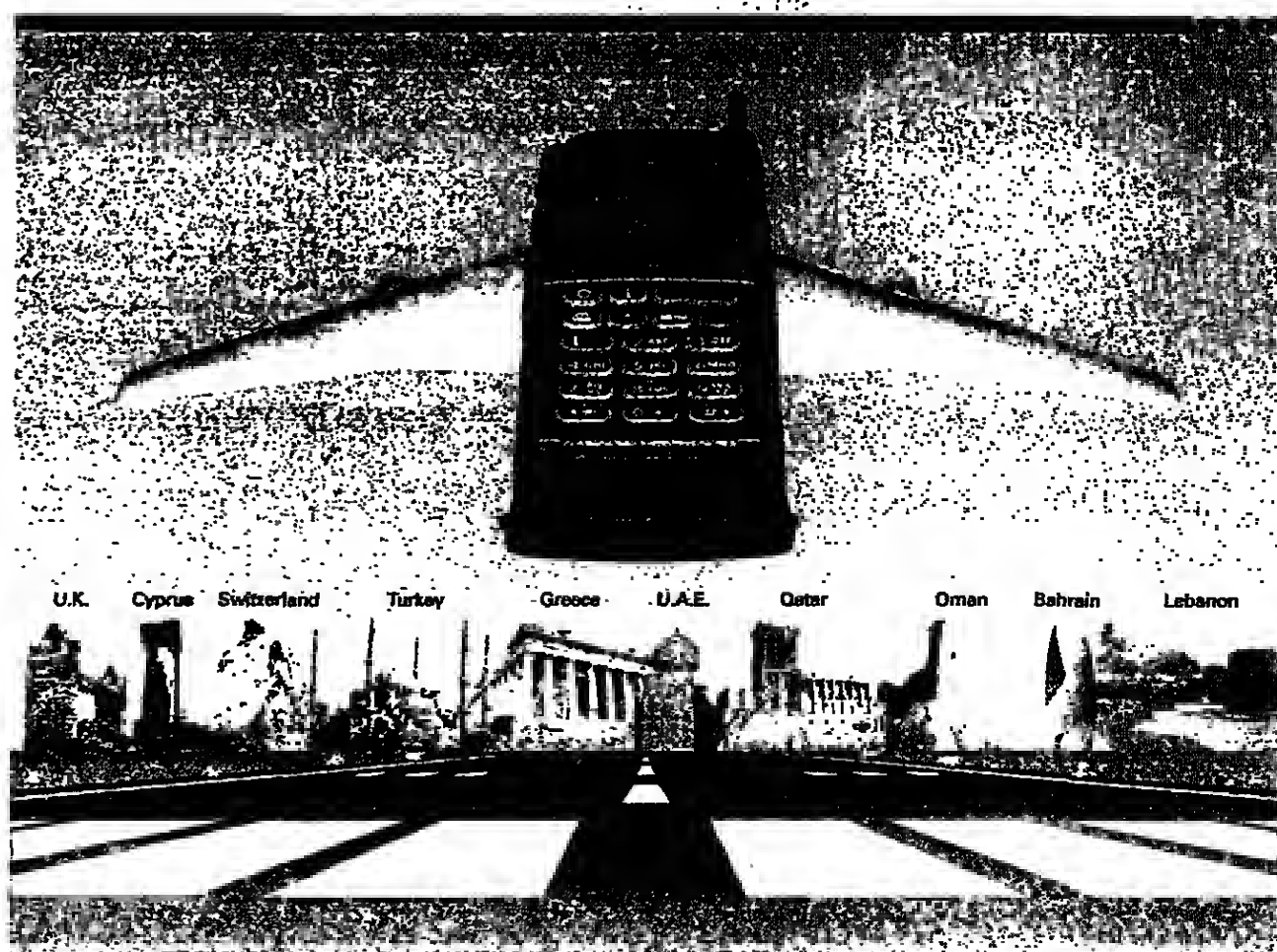
Stringent economy, leakage control and recycling measures can and are being implemented in every country where there are shortages. But there is a limit to what can be achieved in this way and, ultimately, additional supplies will have to be found and piped in the cities where they are needed. Some proposed schemes are as dramatic as the Libyan project. For example, the so-called Peace Pipeline, inspiration of a former prime minister of Turkey, planned to take river water from eastern Turkey and pipe it through two branches, one to the Gulf states and one through

Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan and on to Saudi Arabia's Red Sea cities. The Great Man-Made River Project has demonstrated that the technology is there to solve all the engineering problems that could be expected.

But where would the money come from and are the states along the way certain to remain at peace and in harmony to share this asset for its lifetime? Not easy to answer these questions. But on a smaller, more realistic scale, there are many projects where long, but not impossibly long, pipelines can and will be the solution to drought-stricken cities looking to remove new supplies of water.

Amman's water shortages are too well-known to need repeating. The authorities are pressing ahead with plans to bring water from the Disi Mudawarra aquifer to Amman. This will be one of the biggest, if not the biggest, projects ever undertaken in Jordan and the cost will be formidable. But with a little help, much of the work could probably be undertaken by Jordanian companies using Jordanian skills. In terms of pipe volume, the Disi-Amman pipeline project is about 7 per cent of the pipe so far installed in the Libyan project. By comparison, it maybe sounds a little more do-able. In any event, Amman will have its water. After all, isn't Amman at least as important as Benghazi or Tripoli?

The writer, a Briton, has travelled extensively, for over ten years, in Libya where he became familiar with the progress of the river project. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.



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Norway designers claim solution to traffic pollution

OSLO (R) — While world leaders at the U.N. earth summit debated how to curb fossil fuel emissions and save the planet from environmental disaster, two Norwegian designers believe they have the solution to traffic congestion and related pollution.

Claimed to be the first ever combined solar and wind-power vehicle, their three-wheeled, open, aluminium-framed car is based on a principle similar to the motorised rickshaw popular in many of the world's most over-populated cities.

"This vehicle is a signal for the challenges related to the environment, especially when you think of the parts of the world where the majority of the globe's population lives," said Harald Roestvik, a Stavanger-based architect specialising in solar architecture.

Togelher with Oslo-based industrial designer Peter Opsvik, he has worked secretly for three years on the first prototype of the new car.

Dubbed the Butterfly, because butterflies spread their wings to warm up their bodies with solar energy before they can fly, the general-purpose vehicle is slow in comparison to its gasoline-guzzling contemporaries — it tops just 50 kph. But that is not a problem in crowded cities, Mr. Roestvik said.

"About 85 per cent of people live in Asia. The congestion and pollution in Asian cities are a huge problem. (Average) traffic speeds in a lot of Asian cities are about 7 kph per hour, compared with 18 kph in, say, London," he told Reuters.

Looking like the legendary Citroen 2CV, with the roof jacked up at the back, the Butterfly can seat the driver and two to three passengers.

Its roof has three solar panels extending from the windscreen to a black wire sphere containing the windmill at the back. A battery at the rear of the car is continuously charged by electricity from the sun and wind.

Mr. Roestvik said the vehicle could provide a solution to harnessing the natural resources of sunshine and wind abundant in many Asian and African countries, which often spend large proportions of their budgets on importing fossil fuels.

"It is amazing nobody has looked at this before. In cities such as Dakar, Calcutta and Bangkok, the pollution problems are dreadful. I've been physically sick in Mexico city from pollution," said Mr. Roestvik.

The Butterfly project so far has been funded solely by the designers, but a Norwegian environmental group, the Bellona Foundation, has now stepped in to lend support.

Bellona has been a vocal critic of Norwegian energy policy, both for increasing production of oil and gas without dealing with the resulting rise in emissions of the so-called greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO2), and for doing little to encourage reductions in domestic energy demand.

The Scandinavian country is the world's second largest oil exporter after Saudi Arabia and is one of the top five gas sellers to continental Europe.

The state has a burgeoning budget surplus forecast at 57 billion crowns (\$7.9 billion) in 1997, thanks to the rich hydrocarbon resources in the north sea.

"We (Norway) are exporting oil with the result of 600 million tonnes of CO2 emissions every year and we have the income from this oil," said Frederic Hauge, Bellona's leader.

"There is a moral responsibility for Norway to use some of the income from the oil industry to take the costs of developing new technology... We wanted to show this electric vehicle could form part of a realistic and practical solution to the world's pollution problems," Mr. Hauge said.

Mr. Roestvik said that, if two Norwegian innovators could come up with a serious prototype for a "clean" vehicle, just think what an industry or state-funded project could do.

It was time for Norway and for authorities around the world to become involved in looking for alternative solutions to fossil fuels, he said.

"Norway is not in the lead in environmental matters. Norway is protecting its oil and gas interests full stop," he said.

"You don't need to be an expert in pollution or have any more proof, just stand on the street corner of any major city and do your own research."

"The world spends so much on conferences, research and more conferences. We're saying: 'We know how bad it is and let's do something about it.'"



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Central Bank Governor Ziyad Fariz and other senior bankers reviewing monetary plans and policies (Petra photo)

Majali visits Central Bank of Jordan

Fariz reveals restructuring plans

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday visited the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) and was briefed by its governor, Ziyad Fariz, on the bank's policies and future plans to augment the foreign currency reserves and liberalise financial dealings.

Dr. Fariz said that the bank is currently studying a restructuring process so as to deal with the new developments in world financial markets.

Speaking at the meeting, which was attended by heads of the bank's departments, Dr. Fariz noted that the CBJ, which maintains very strong ties with world financial institutions, will shortly merge some of its departments to promote their operations at the internal and external levels.

He said that the plan also aims at disposing of a great deal of bureaucratic procedures.

Dr. Fariz outlined a CBJ plan for better managing the savings deposited in the country's savings funds which are entrusted with the Central Bank. He said altogether these funds are estimated at JD500 million and the CBJ will find ways to ensure better investment of this large capital in income generating projects.

Among the new measures taken by the CBJ recently was its decision to fully liberalise foreign exchange

dealings in Jordan.

The move taken last month means removing all restrictions whatsoever on bringing into the Kingdom or taking out any amount of Jordanian or foreign currencies and gold.

It said that payments for goods or possible services as well as capital payments can be conducted without restriction.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, JULY 18, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You could make some interesting and profitable discoveries today by catching up on your correspondence which you have neglected. Take your mate out on the town later this evening to a romantic location and have a wonderful time.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Pay some overdue visits today to close friends and relatives who may be feeling a bit depressed. Business can be quite successful at this time if you ask for assistance from fellow associates who can be quite helpful.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you need some information to help your finances today, consult only qualified experts who will have the answers. Some special thought for your mate is needed so that he or she will not feel neglected.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Follow the directions of a superior carefully today, and pay special attention to any details. You should not allow anyone to get your dander up at this time or you could regret the results from your actions.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If you have some special entertainment in mind today, be sure it is not too expensive or you could find yourself short of funds. It is extremely important that you take no risks while driving on the highway.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get to labouring on making your home more comfortable today, and then invite some guests in later this evening. You should not allow any disagreements to start there or there could be words said which will be regretted at a later time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) You will have an opportunity to get out with friends today so make the best

of this situation. It would be wise to accept this invitation later this evening, as you could make some valuable acquaintances for your success.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you handle your career activities with enthusiasm and confidence today, a superior will be most impressed. Take it easy later this evening, and get plenty of rest so that you can handle any difficulties which come your way.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a day today for new experiences, so go out with your mate for some unusual recreational activities or just try a new restaurant later this evening. This is a good time for seeking the advice of knowledgeable people.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Stay around only positive-thinking, cheerful persons today, and avoid an acquaintance who is bothersome. Do something special for your mate later this evening which he or she is not expecting and thereby gain his or her appreciation.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) It is important that you find a way to get out of that rut you've been in and improve your mood at this time. Your good friends can cheer you up today, if you allow them to do so and don't appear to be a wet blanket.

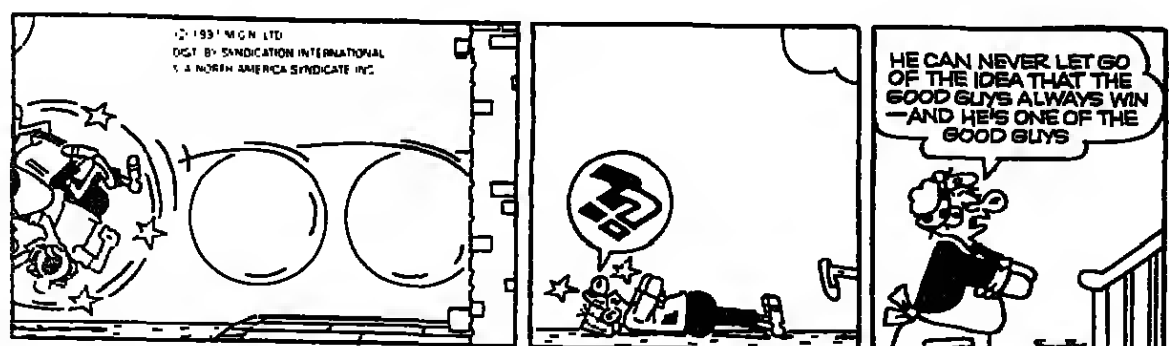
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You will have an opportunity to drastically increase your income today, so keep your eyes open to any opportunities. Listen to the ideas of a successful friend and follow his or her advice and use whatever you see is feasible.

Birthstone of July: Pearl — Ruby — Tiger's Eye

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7977	0.6970	1.4833	116.16	1.3735	1744.20	2.0244	6.0720
DE Mark	0.5563	-	0.8337	0.8248	64.59	0.7636	969.65	1.1260	3.3771
GB Sterling	1.6750	3.0124	-	2.4840	194.40	2.3006	2821.54	3.3909	10.1706
CH Franc	0.6742	121.15	0.4021	-	76.29	0.9255	1175.50	136.46	4.0918
JP Yen	0.0088	1.5473	0.5135	1.2764	-	1.1821	15.01	174.25	5.2289
CA Dollar	0.7281	1.2768	0.4319	1.0682	1.18	-	1243.27	1.4373	4.3027
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0298	0.3419	0.0850	1504.21	0.7868	-	11.60	3.4783
NL Guilder	0.4840	88.76	0.2945	73.25	57.32	0.8781	861.10	-	2.9979
FR Franc	0.1647	0.2959	0.0982	24.4115	10.10	0.2261	33.32	33.3200	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NG	FRF
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7604	0.3770	3.6400	0.3033	3.6725	1534.00	3.3860
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2972	0.5325	5.1412	0.4283	5.1871	2168.67	4.7838
GB Sterling	0.2668	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.8009	0.98	408.02	0.9031
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8781	0.9485	-	3.66	0.8044	9.74	4089.16	9.9844
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.8033	1.01	421.43	0.9305
Kuwait Dinar	3.2676	2.3347	12.3674	1.2431	12.00	-	12.11	8058.53	0.9305
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	1.0212	0.9912	0.8026	-	417.70	0.9222
Lebanese/1000	0.85	0.4816	2.4449	0.2457	2.3729	0.1977	2.3941	-	2.2079
Egyptian	0.2953	0.2090	1.1073	0.1113	1.0747	0.0895	1.0843	452.92	-

Energy									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NG	FRF
Brent	18.67	18.53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
W. Texa	10.61	10.76	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bonny	18.67	18.63	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dubai	17.25	17.20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UL Gas	181.00	180.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

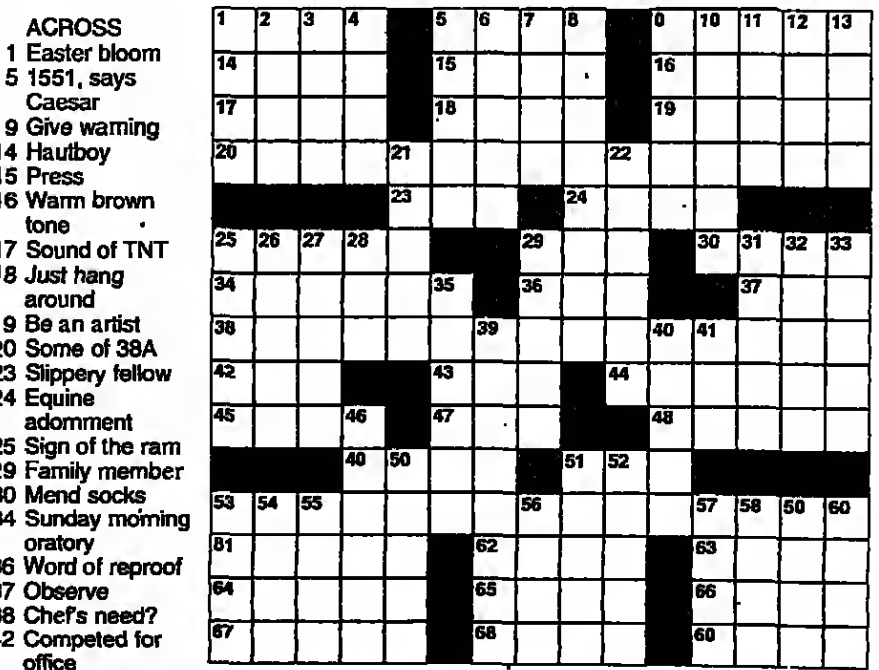
Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NG	FRF
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4796	0.15910	0.39560	30.9809	-	-	-	-
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48981	0.16256	0.40409	31.8376	-	-	-	-
KW Dinar	3.2976	5.9312	1.96889	4.69476	383.142	-	-	-	-
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.77099	1.58378	3.83701	308.166	-	-	-	-
CY Pound	1.89	3.3975	1.1276	2.8026	210.510	-	-	-	-

Metal Prices									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NG	FRF
Gold (oz's)	318.7	310.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Silver (oz's)	4.29	4.31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Platinum (oz's)	405	409	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AL (3 Months)	1567	1568	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CU (3 Months)	2262	2264	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zinc (3 Months)	1494	1495	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lead (3 Months)	634	635	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ni (3 Months)	6700	6725	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NG	FRF
USD	5.40	5.63	5.72	5.78	5.87	-	-	-	-
GBP	8.72	6.96	7.12	7.00	7.25	-	-	-	-
JPY	0.44	0.51	0.54	0.58	0.62	-	-	-	-
DEM	3.06	3.06	3.10	3.16	3.23	-	-	-	-
FRF	3.21	3.27	3.38	3.44	3.43	-	-	-	-
CHF	1.37	1.37	1.43	1.53	1.53	-	-	-	-
ITL	6.86	6.84	6.75	6.57	6.37	-	-	-	-

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Change	% Chg	High	Low	Pr Cls			
New York	DOW JONES	8004.51	28.8	0.36	8006.37	7953.41	7975.71	-	-
New York	S&P 500	932.5	8.74	0.73	933.83	925.78	928.78	-	-
London	FT-SE 100	4964.2	64.9	1.32	4991.8	4909.6	4899.3	-	-
Tokyo	Nikkei 225	20358.74	289.33	1.44	20435.6	20139.3	20069.4	-	-
Paris	CAC 40	2988.01	37.31	1.26	2998.28	2968.63	2950.7	-	-
Frankfurt	DAX	4201.24	80.11	1.94	4202.05	4160.54	4121.13	-	-

THE Daily Crossword



by Frank R. Jackson

Thursdays Puzzle solved:									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70

DOWN									
1	Timber wolf	2	Construction item	3	Solitary	4	Safe-cracker	5	Pooh creator
6	Talk foolishly	7	Garden soil	8	Notorious	9	Quivering tree	10	Rented
11	Samoan seaport	12	Al's milieu	13	Deck officer	14	Noted story teller	15	Religious singer
16	Houston athlete	17	Restored building, briefly	18	Goodnight girl	19	Printer's measures	20	Beer holder
21	Digestion	22	Allude	23	Indigent	24	Crustacean claw	25	Hackneyed story
26	Brainchild of 21D	27	Fib	28	Chattered on and on	29	Actions	30	Choice tea
31	Change the text	32	Bosc or Bartlett	33	Other than this	34	Large bonnet	35	It springs eternal
36	Pretty girl	37	Mental impression	38	Camera's eye	39	Narrow wood strip	40	Where a collector's heaven

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, JULY 17, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If your mate is in a bad mood today, keep silent and use patience to avoid a tiff. This is a good time to catch up on your reading or writing of business material and this will make you successful in the eyes of bigwigs.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Even if you are very eager for some recreational activities today, you should not get into something which is too costly and which could leave you short of funds. Avoid people who like to spread gossip and which could backfire.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Much care driving will be necessary today, especially on the highway. Make sure you use the right words on the telephone, thereby you will get ahead through the eyes of a bigwig who can be beneficial towards your success.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Try to be more efficient in your daily activities today, and thereby you can gain the recognition of superiors. You may not like the ideas of a fellow associate, however, you should not say anything negative concerning this person.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You may be tempted to make a spiteful remark today, however, keep your temper and stay out of any difficult situations. Use more than usual care while driving on the highway and thereby you can avoid any difficulties.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Don't make any radical changes in your daily routines this morning which could deter your success. Clear up any credit matters you have been putting off lately and thereby you will have extra funds available in an emergency.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Conditions at home may not be particularly pleasant today, however, you can easily find a method of operation to solve this difficult situation. Later this evening should be a happy one, especially if you spend it with loved ones.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be sure you solve any business difficulties today before you go out for a good time with your close friends. Don't take any risks later this evening with your financial or business activities which could cause you harm to your reputation.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You should not get into a disagreement over a trip you've been planning with your loved ones or there could be many difficulties. Go out with some of your best friends for a happy night on the town.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You may be anxious to gain more assets today, however, you'll need more preparation before you act. Finish any tasks you have left undone and thereby you can gain the recognition of those in authority.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Some information you need can be gathered from a close friend today, however, you should not be forceful or rude in acquiring it. You can get into any new recreational activities at this time, so seek out your close friends.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A public matter has been difficult to solve for some time, however, with a little patience, you can easily achieve the desired results at this time. Later this evening will be good for you to go out no the town with your mate.

Birthstone of July: Pearl — Ruby — Tiger's Eye

World Bank

WASHINGTON — The World Bank made commitments to countries to provide \$1 billion for a new fund to help them deal with a state of emergency.

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World Bank loan commitments drop to \$19.1b in '97

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The World Bank made lending commitments to developing countries totalling \$19.1 billion for its fiscal year 1997, which ended June 30, the bank has said in a statement.

That was a 10.7 per cent drop from the \$21.4 billion in 1996.

The total included \$14.5 billion in loans from the bank itself for 141 projects, and \$4.6 billion in

credits from the International Development Association (IDA), the bank agency that lends money to the world's poorest nations.

The World Bank made some \$21.4 billion in loan commitments in 1996 and \$22.5 billion in 1995.

Combined gross 1997 disbursements rose some four per cent, to nearly \$20 billion from \$19.3 billion a year earlier.

Some \$13.4 billion

came from the World Bank, while IDA gross disbursements totaled \$6 billion.

The bank is "very encouraged by the fact that at level of disbursements — the money that is actually making a difference on the ground — rose four per cent from last year," said Gautam Kaji, World Bank managing director for operations.

"This coincides with an improvement in the quality of our project portfolio. We are disbursing more for better projects," said Mr. Kaji.

"In retelling our processes, we have taken a sharp look at — and a sharp knife to — the lending pipeline, so lending

approvals have fallen as a consequence," he added.

"But we are confident that, with a sharper focus on client responsiveness ... lending — especially IDA — will rise over the next fiscal years. Improvements in Africa's capacity and performance should allow us to increase IDA lending for high-quality projects," said Mr. Kaji.

Africa received \$1.74 billion in loan commitments in fiscal year 1997, of which \$1.68 billion were IDA credits, the bank said.

The four single sectors receiving the most support were agriculture, electric power, urban development, and public sector management, the

bank said. In 1996, the region received \$2.7 billion.

The East Asia and Pacific region received \$4.9 billion in new loan commitments, up from \$3.4 billion a year ago, the bank said.

The funds included \$792 million from IDA. Agriculture received \$1.3 billion, followed by electric power and other energy, with \$1.13 billion.

South Asia received \$2 billion, including \$1.4 billion from IDA, against \$3 billion last year. India was still the region's largest borrower, with \$1.5 billion, according to the statement.

The only region to experience a boost in assistance, Europe and Central

Asia received \$5.1 billion, a nearly \$1 billion increase from the \$4.2 billion it received in 1996, the bank reported.

The social sector was the largest single recipient, with loans totalling \$935 million, and the Russian Federation was the region's largest borrower, with \$1.7 billion in loans.

The World Bank said loan commitments to Latin America and the Caribbean reached \$4.6 billion, against \$4.4 billion a year ago.

The Middle East and North Africa received loan commitments totalling \$915 million against \$1.6 billion in 1996, the bank said.

Asia pays price for new wealth as currencies snap

HONG KONG (R) — It is a problem few experience and even fewer dread but for Asian nations, new and sudden wealth has undoubtedly turned into a curse.

The flood of cash that poured into Asia in 1993 swamped the region's tiny economies.

Those nations who failed to manage it responsibly issued a long-term invitation to currency speculators with breaking up Asia's U.S.-dollar bloc.

"In some aspects, the tumble of the Thai baht and the Philippine peso was a crisis waiting to happen," Merrill Lynch said in a research report.

"Its immediate trigger may be the mismanagement of exchange rates, but a deeper reason is the growing challenge to macroeconomic management induced by rapid integration of world financial markets and increasing flow of capital, especially highly liquid private flows," it added.

Asia's currency regime, heavily dependent upon links to the U.S. dollar, is in tatters with the Thai baht and Philippine peso newly floated and the Indonesian rupiah and Malaysian ringgit considered still vulnerable to speculative assault.

As central bankers kneel down and start picking up the pieces, questions are being asked. How did it happen?

Economists have been warning of increased Asian currency vulnerability for well over a year, but the alarms started sounding more loudly as evidence of Thailand's financial problems mounted in March.

Thailand is now paying the price for years of easy money, with interest rates skyhigh, the baht in the doldrums and a bloated financial sector undergoing a major shake-out while economists whisper "recession."

Investors' sudden enthusiasm for mutual funds and private pension savings plans in the early 1990s persuaded fund managers to pour money into Asia seeking high rates of return. But the fixed exchange rate prevented some of these smaller

economies from countering the inflationary effects of the flush of funds. High rates merely attracted more money keen to earn the interest and avoid currency loss when unwinding positions.

Some, like Malaysia, attempted to sterilise the inflows by mopping it up through the issuance of government paper.

Others, like Thailand, spent and lent freely, embarking on ambitious property bonanzas and racking up hefty liabilities in consumer and foreign-denominated debt.

But when the bubble burst, money moved out just as quickly as it moved in, leaving chaos in its wake and exposing clearly the immaturity of Asia's financial infrastructure.

The risk posed to Asia from rapid, sometimes violent capital flows was highlighted by International Monetary Fund chief Michel Camdessus last March.

"Financial sector reforms and increased access to international markets expose domestic financial systems to new risk," Mr. Camdessus said.

"In many countries in Asia and elsewhere, prudential regulation and supervision have not kept pace with the new complexities of banking business."

The presence of large capital inflows reduces the room for policy manoeuvre and limits the scope for policy mistakes, Mr. Camdessus said. Under these circumstances, there is no substitute for stable macroeconomic policies.

"The challenge for policymakers is thus not how to prevent capital from fleeing the country at time of crisis, but how to ensure good housekeeping at time of boom."

"In this respect, factors like high domestic savings, prudent fiscal and monetary management, stable prices, healthy banks, flexible factor markets and exchange rates, and careful debt management are critical," it concluded.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jerusalem Insurance Company posts lower earnings, distributes dividends at the rate of 19.5%

** DESPITE A JD359,500 increase, or a five per cent rise in the amount of premiums collected last year, the Jerusalem Insurance Company was unable to prevent net earnings to fall below the 1995 level. Net earnings at the end of 1996 stood at JD443,000 compared to JD598,500 at the end of 1995 although premiums collected in 1996 amounted to JD7.6 million compared to JD7.3 million in the preceding.

Board Chairman Amin Shugair attributed the decline in earnings to the negative results at the department of motors, especially from the third party insurance category. Even improvement in other departments was not enough to cover the deficit, the chairman said. Earnings from investments were also lower as they amounted to JD106,700 compared to JD139,400 earned in 1995.

The decline was a result of a JD77,600 loss incurred from the sale of a portion of the shares portfolio.

After taking into consideration various allocations and reserves, the net profit was JD426,700 (JD581,900 in 1995) of which JD134,300 were approved by the general assembly to be distributed as dividends to shareholders at a rate of 12.5 per cent (AJ Ra'i).

Export and Finance Bank announces JD222,500 net profit

** THE EXPORT and Finance Bank generated a JD222,500 net profit last year and the general assembly has approved transferring JD130,500 of this amount to retained earnings. The bank's operational earnings from interest and commission amounted to JD1.4 million whereas interest and commission paid were about JD1.2 million.

Board Chairman Ali Husari told the shareholders that deposits reached JD13.3 million, 68 per cent of which were deposits from clients and the rest were deposits from other banks and financial institutions. The bank extended JD10.7 million in financing by the end of 1996. 69.2 per cent of the financing went for the industrial and mining sectors, 5.6 per cent for general trade, 14 per cent for services and general facilities and 11.2 per cent for other sectors.

Mr. Husari said that the bank started actual operations during the second half of 1996 although it acquired the Central Bank licence towards the end of 1995. He added the bank benefited of the JD5 million of resources made available by the Central Bank to finance export projects.

"At present, the bank is benefiting from about \$40 million of funds being provided by the World Bank to the Jordanian government through the Central Bank to finance productive and export projects (Al Arab Al Yawm).

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARJAH											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 16/07/1997											
PART 12 MONTHS HIGH	12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	OTV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
1 284,500	214,500	ARAB BANK	13.2	1.40	90	2480	705235	279.50	286.00	6.50	+
2 2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	18	10300	21204	2.09	2.08	-0.01	-
3 2,500	2,700	BANK OF JORDAN	6.7	0.00	6	6450	20917	3.11	3.20	0.09	+
4 1,210	1,880	NIC. EAST INV. BK.	60.4	0.00	10	6700	6135	.92	.92	-	-
5 2,480	2,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.1	7.76	11	6700	14609	2.18	2.16	-0.02	-
6 5,200	4,400	THE HOUSING BK.	14.7	3.95	9	15575	76219	4.91	4.91	-	-
7 4,180	2,440	JOR. KOWAT BANK	10.0	0.00	3	124	347	2.62	2.81	0.19	+
8 1,050	760	JOR. GULF BANK	4.6	9.09	16	64050	48955	.76	.77	0.01	+
9 4,050	1,480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.5	3.12	31	5912	22684	2.76	2.80	0.04	+
10 1,800	1,110	UNION BK. INV. INV.	7	0.00	3	550	660	1.16	1.20	0.04	+
11 3,800	3,000	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	20.5	0.00	5	9058	28800	3.18	3.19	0.01	+
12 1,460	1,000	DELTA AL-HIL (INDUSTRA)	9	13.16	1	100	114	1.14	1.14	-	-
13 1,440	980	PELAGIA INV. BK.	9	0.00	16	8650	6064	.96	.93	-0.03	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 212.19			CHANGE: +1.77		219	136709	953860				
14 2,470	2,150	GENERAL ARAB INSUR.	11.6	7.25	2	6667	15334	2.20	2.30	0.10	+
15 2,280	1,590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	4.5	12.58	9	4530	7262	1.63	1.59	-0.04	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 112.52			CHANGE: -0.22		12	11212	22635				
16 1,820	1,500	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.0	6.06	16	13607	22457	1.66	1.65	-0.01	-
17 2,780	2,340	HILWA MINERALS	13.5	5.82	1	300	804	2.68	2.68	-	-
18 6,100	4,100	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	15.4	4.00	7	3010	15550	5.00	5.00	-	-
19 2,660	2,150	SULFIDE	16.0	4.71	6	24250	66688	2.66	2.75	0.09	+
20 1,550	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	0	0.00	44	27650	41144	1.45	1.49	0.04	+
21 810	480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	25.2	0.00	2	1500	765	1.00	1.02	0.02	+
22 3,720	2,890	JORDAN INTL. INV. EDUC.	7.8	0.00	5	2100	6707	2.91	2.97	0.04	+
23 1,220	930	TARQA EDUCATION	0	0.00	2	500	468	.93	.93	-	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 108.46			CHANGE: +0.65		83	72917	153582				
24 4,450	3,070	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	27.3	2.72	27	55667	225157	4.05	4.05	-	-
25 4,140	2,710	JOR. PROGRESSIVE WIRE	11.0	2.53	4	1617	6379	4.10	3.95	-0.15	-
26 10,250	8,850	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.5	9.07	7	365	3576	9.84	9.80	-0.04	-
27 7,250	6,900	JORDAN TANNING	6.9	5.35	1	500	2805	5.90	5.61	-0.29	-
28 1,470	1,050	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	10.4	8.33	1	500	600	1.20	1.20	-	-
29 3,260	1,650	INDUSTRIAL COMB. JOR.	9	0.00	8	784	1318	1.65	1.72	0.07	+
30 4,100	3,040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	10.8	5.10	4	577	2260	3.95	3.92	-0.03	-
31 2,570	2,050	JORDAN DAIRY	8.2	10.10	2	360	870	2.40	2.42	0.02	+
32 1,820	1,310	JOR. PAPER FACTORY	16.5	6.02	1	250	333	1.33	1.33	-	-
33 10,250	5,260	ARAB CHEM. OTHERS	15.3	6.00	1	150	570	5.26	5.00	-0.26	-
34 3,850	2,400	ARAB ALUM. IND.	10.29	4	1514	3699	2.45	2.43	-0.02	-	
35 960	450	LIVESTOCK & POLYTEX	9.7	0.00	9	11650	5359	.46	.46	-	-
36 1,310	1,000	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	32.1	0.00	9	4950	5164	1.01	1.05	0.04	+
37 770	510	NATIONAL IND.	9	0.00	6	4800	2496	.52	.52	-	-
38 1,330	510	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	9	2050	1087	.53	.53	-	-
39 3,150	2,130	NATL. CABLE WIRE MANF.	40.1	0.00	1	3500	8750	2.50	2.50	-	-
40 950	540	JOR. SULFIDE-CHEN	9	0.00	3	800	427	.54	.54	-	-
41 2,020	1,100	UNIV. HOUS. IND.	9	0.00	6	1450	1614	1.12	1.11	-0.01	-
42 1,520	1,000	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	14.5	9.26	41	28050	30392	1.06	1.06	0.02	+
43 1,600	1,300	NATL. CHLORINE	13.0	5.07	5	1515	2093	1.40	1.38	-0.02	-
44 1,090	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	13.4	0.00	4	1550	1200	.83	.84	0.01	+
45 2,090	1,420	AL-JAY IRONY YEAR	15.0	0.00	4	1350	3645	1.43	1.43	-	-
46 1,330	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.4	0.00	38	68950	79970	1.15	1.17	0.02	+
47 1,260	860	UNION CH. & VEG.	40.9	0.00	9	4350	3923	.87	.90	0.03	+
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 126.15			CHANGE: -0.50		205	197059	391978				
GRAND TOTAL											
INDEX: 145.43			CHANGE: +0.77		520	417897	152055				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 16/07/1997											
48 640	350	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	3	3250	1235	.37	.38	0.01	+
49 670	410	JOR. TRADE FAC.	11.2	0.00	23	126580	54184	.42	.42	-	-
50 1,070	1,070	JORDAN FOR INVESTMENT	75.4	0.00	4	30000	36500	1.15	1.15	-	-
51 950	600	JOR. FID. INV. CO.	9	0.00	20	34000	10908	.56	.55	-0.01	-
52 840	660	UNION INV. SOF	9	0.00	26	50450	10909	.69	.70	0.01	+
53 660	370	ARAB FID. INVEST.	9	0.00	11	20000	8008	.44	.45	0.01	+
54 950	610	AL-DAMRIY 751	60.5	0.00	3	292	767	.62	.62	0.01	+
55 750	400	NATL. MULT. INFO. MANICO	9	0.00	26	81050	41326	.50	.51	0.01	+
56 840	430	KAYAK DIES & MOULDS	9	0.00	1	750	323	.44	.43	-0.01	-
57 850	710	JORDAN STEEL	33.0	0.00	6	3250	2343	.72	.73	0.01	+
58 730	600	MIDEAST FERR. 751	8	0.00	3	577	209	.61	.61	-	-
59 1,220	860	UNION TOBACCO 751	9	0.00	4	1223	912	.93	.94	0.01	+
60 580	550	RAI PULP. 851	8	0.00	6	1600	1440	.51	.55	0.04	+
61 600	320	CENTRAL INV.	20.3	0.00	5	291	974	.36	.23	-0.13	-
62 820	590	NATL. POLYTEX	8	0.00	12	9545	5723	.38	.41	0.03	+
63 1,000	730	NAT. ALUMINIUM. 751	9	0.00	16	10400	4992	.73	.73	-	-
64 870	590	KID. IRON COMPLEX	7.8	15.87	10	8200	5085	.62	.62	0.01	+
GRAND TOTAL											
INDEX: 191.81			CHANGE: +0.77		172	363136	191815				
T = New 12 months high											
F = New 12 months low											
L = Listed during the past 12 months											
P/E ratio is 100 or more											
+ = Positive P/E											
- = Rating is zero or A/A for the most recent year											



A large gallery watches as Tiger Woods of the U.S. works on his chipping game during a practice round at Royal Troon. Woods, the current U.S. Masters champion, will attempt to capture the British Open title when play begins here on July 17 (Reuters photo)

Johnson happy at World Championship invitation

WACO, Texas (AFP) — Michael Johnson is going to the World Athletics Championships next month and he could not be happier, even though it took an unprecedented special invitation to all reigning champions.

"I'm very pleased, of course," Johnson said. "I was hoping this would happen."

Johnson, the reigning world and Olympic champion in the 200- and 400-metres, was injured and missed the U.S. championships last month, the qualifying event for the U.S. world team.

Faced with the prospect of losing Johnson and several other top U.S. athletes, officials voted to allow reigning champions to defend crowns.

"They did this for the sport," Johnson said. "It was a good business decision."

"We didn't ask for this," he added. "But they did it, and I'm honoured to be treated like this. That's the position I'm in."

"The Olympic schedule was changed for me. The wild-card rule was put in. People want my autograph and treat me like a hero. I hope I can give something back to the sport by competing."

Johnson only plans to defend his 400m crown, a decision Johnson said

was made well before he suffered an injured left quadriceps in a 150m race against Canada's Donovan Bailey on June 1.

Johnson has not raced since June 25, when he finished fifth in a 400m in Paris, losing his first race at that distance in eight years.

"I don't feel I have anything to prove," Johnson said. "Why would I? Athletes are going to lose races. I lost one. I've run two races this year and lost one."

But Johnson said his top form is nearly back and he will challenge the 400m world record of 43.29 seconds set by Butch Reynolds.

"I feel I can run three rounds and get in the final and possibly run a 42," Johnson said. "If I go out and run my kind of race, a smart race, I can't be beat. As long as I stay healthy, I won't be beat."

"When I run, I want to be confident that I can beat anyone, including the best in the world. I wouldn't be going if it wasn't 100 per cent. I don't want to compete if I'm not 100 per cent. I'm on target to be there."

Phillies beat Braves 1st time in season

ATLANTA (R) — Garrett Stephenson tossed a four-hitter and Mike Lieberthal drove in a career-high four runs Tuesday as the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Atlanta Braves for the first time in nine games this season, 8-1.

Stephenson (3-4) got his first career complete game, won for the first time since May 23 and snapped a personal four-game losing streak. He allowed a pair of doubles and two singles, walked two and struck out three.

It was the first complete game by a Phillie other than Curt Schilling since July 27, 1996.

"I just want to win, that's it," Stephenson said. "I'm just starting to get comfortable again."

"He pitched a great game, that guy can pitch," said Braves manager Bobby Cox.

The win over the Major League best Braves (59-34) was just the third in 18 games for the Phillies (26-64).

In San Diego, the San Francisco Giants scored 13 times in the seventh to rout the Padres 16-2.

The Giants broke open a tight 3-2 game with the inning. The 52-minute inning saw nine hits, five walks, a hit batsman and two errors. Giants outfielder Stan Javier had a chance to tie a Major-League record with three hits in the inning but grounded out for the final out of the frame.

The 13 runs set a modern-era record for the seventh and fell just two shy of the all-time league record. Barry Bonds homered twice for the Giants, his 22nd and 23rd.

Kirk Rueter (6-4) got the

win. Andy Ashby (5-6) was tagged for seven runs — six earned — and eight hits in six innings. Pete Smith and Rich Batchelor took the brunt of the seventh inning, though. Smith retired just one batter, surrendering five runs, while Batchelor was hammered for four runs without an out.

Padres outfielder Tony Gwynn went 0-for-3 before being lifted in the eighth, ending his 19-game hitting streak.

In Cincinnati, Ray Lankford hit a pair of long home runs and drove in three runs and Mike Difelice added a two-run single as the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Reds 7-4.

In Pittsburgh, pinch-hitter Turner Ward's single in the bottom of the eighth scored Jason Kendall with the go-ahead run as the red-hot Pirates rallied for the second straight game and completed a two-game sweep of the New York Mets, 4-3.

The win was the fourth straight for the Pirates, who have won 11 of 13 and maintained a one-game lead over Houston in the National League Central Division.

In Chicago, pinch-hitter

Bill Spiers cracked a three-run homer off Mel Rojas (0-3) in the top of the ninth to rally the Houston Astros to a 5-3 victory over the Cubs.

The homer made a winner out of Darryl Kile (12-3), who is 5-0 in his last six starts and has lost just once in his last 15. Kile yielded three runs and seven hits in eight innings.

In Florida, Dusti Hermanson pitched a five-hitter with a career-high nine strikeouts for his first complete game and shutout and four different players drove in runs as the Montreal Expos blanked the Marlins 5-0.

In Colorado, Chan Ho Park (7-5) allowed three runs over 6-1/3 innings and left fielder Todd Helton made a game-saving catch in the ninth to preserve Todd Worrell's 23rd save as the surging Los Angeles Dodgers edged the Rockies 6-5.

Mike Piazza had three hits and two RBI for the Dodgers.

Ravanelli in talks with Everton

LIVERPOOL (AFP) — Fabrizio Ravanelli flew in from Italy on Wednesday to meet new Everton manager Howard Kendall to thrash out details of his possible move to the English Premiership club.

The silver-haired Italian striker, still under contract with First Division Middlesbrough, met Kendall at Manchester airport before being taken to see the club's training ground facilities.

The two then moved on to the club's Goodison Park stadium for talks about Ravanelli's personal terms, after Everton agreed on a 7.5 million pound fee (about \$12 million) with Middlesbrough for the former Juventus striker.

Kendall was optimistic about clinching his first major signing since returning for his third stint as manager.

2nd Division Basketball Preliminary round concludes Friday

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The preliminary round of the Second Division Basketball Championship concludes Friday when the top two teams of the two groups will advance to the final round of the 1998 season.

Homemmen, previously a first division team, will face newcomers Al Wihdat Thursday as group leaders and last year's runners-up Al Jeel meet Abu Nusair in Group A.

Three Group B matches are also scheduled in Irbid. While Ashrafieh and Raya seem well placed to retain their lead and qualify to the second round from Group B, the Amman teams of Group A will have to fight it out to clinch the two top spots in the group.

Al Jeel are the only unbeaten team in the group and will next be facing Abu Nusair Friday with the latter having to score a win in order to qualify.

Al Wihdat will also be looking for a win against Homemmen to secure qualification otherwise score difference and complicated sets of possibilities arise to determine the top two teams vying for the sole qualifying berth to the First Division.

The 12 teams taking part represent both second and third division teams together playing in two groups.

Group A includes Al Jeel, Abu Nusair, Homemmen and newcomers Al Wihdat and Shihan.

Group B includes Gazzet Hashem, Al Raya, Qanun, Ebbin, Sama and Al Ashrafieh.

Group A includes mostly teams from the capital who seem to have the better chance of winning the competition. Homemmen have the most experienced yet inconsistent lineup who won the second division whenever they were relegated except for the past two years when Al Yarmouk and Al Hussein replaced them atop the second division and

were promoted.

Al Rayah and Al Ashrafieh have played in the first division before and only Shihan and Wihdat are the newcomers.

The Jordan Basketball Federation rules stipulate that second division teams be required to register under-16 teams as a prerequisite for participation as of the coming season.

The First Division which now includes Jazireh, Ahli, Orthodoxi, Jalil who will be joined by Hussein and this year's newly promoted team, Al Watani and Yarmouk were relegated to the second division this year.

Standings

Group A	P	W	L	SE	SA	PTS
Al Jeel	3	3	-	216	145	6
Homemmen	4	2	2	198	171	6
Wihdat	3	2	1	238	202	5
Abu Nusair	3	2	1	186	166	5
Shihan	4	-	4	176	310	4
*Fuheis	-	-	-	-	-	-

*pulled out of competition

Group B	P	W	L	SE	SA	PTS
Ashrafieh	4	4	-	252	142	8
Raya	4	3	1	237	175	7
Qanun	4	2	2	215	189	6
Ebbin	4	4	2	189	185	6
G. Hashem	4	1	3	196	200	6
Sama	4	-	4	99	289	4

Desbiens wins 11th stage after protest

PERPIGNAN, France (AFP) — Frenchman Laurent Desbiens won the 192km 11th stage of the Tour de France when Ukrainian Sergey Outchakov was disqualified for dangerous sprinting.

Outchakov was relegated to third behind Italian Carlo Finco — the other rider in the three-man sprint finish. Jan Ullrich of Germany kept the leader's yellow jersey after finishing down the field.

The riders travel to St Etienne on Thursday's rest day for a 55km time-trial on Friday when Ullrich will be expected to stretch his overall lead. He won a 60km time-trial in last year's Tour.

Outchakov, fifth in the Tour's second stage won by Italy's Mario Cipollini, protested his innocence in the sprint finish.

Desbiens' win provided some consolation for the Cofidis team who lost leader Tony Rominger when the Swiss rider broke his collarbone on the second stage. The 27-year-old Frenchman only made his third Tour as a late call-up when two team-members went sick.

Bjame Riis, last year's winner, had to work hard to get back among the leaders early in the day when the field was split in two by a four-man breakaway in difficult cross winds.

Riis then eased his way to the front of the peloton as Frederic Moncassin's gan team worked to thin out the field for a sprint finish.



Tour de France riders climb the Port d'Envalira pass during the 192km third mountain stage of the Tour de France cycling race in the Pyrenees (Reuters photo)

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The new term begins on 7th September, but applications for admission should be made during July & August on Mondays at the school, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, or in writing to P.O. Box 2002, Amman 11181.

For further details: Tel. 5521070-Fax: 5527109

Missing

Perilla Teresta Garces Ignacio, a domestic helper from the Philippines, has left her employer's home and failed to return up to this date. Those who know her whereabouts, please call telephone No. 810362 or 079-50362. Any person who employs Ms. Garces Ignacio or fails to report her whereabouts will be liable to face legal action.



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FORTE GRAND AMMAN

VIENNA (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat denied late Tuesday that international economic aid to the Palestinians was being embezzled by members of his administration.

"We haven't the money to have corruption," Mr. Arafat said after talks with Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima. "It's part of a campaign against us."

Mr. Arafat was questioned about British press reports of corruption among his cronies in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) who had taken over control of large sectors of business in the Gaza Strip.

He said aid was linked to precise projects which were closely monitored by doozors and the World Bank. In their last meeting in Washington these had commented on the transparency and accountability of the Palestinian authorities, he added.

On the tense situation with Israel, Mr. Arafat said "we cannot see any other alternative but to continue working with the peace-process. It's a very difficult and very sensitive situation. we're facing real troubles."

He estimated that the Israeli closure of crossing points to Gaza was costing the Palestinian economy between \$7 million and \$9 million daily.

KUWAIT CITY (AFP)—Kuwait's liberal MPs have exposed their weakness in parliament by failing to oust the finance minister over alleged corruption in government institutions, analysts said Wednesday.

Three liberal MPs grilled Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Nasser Al Rodhan for a marathon 12 hours Tuesday, but appeared unable even to muster the 10 names required to table a motion of no confidence.

enough support to table the no-confidence motion "was a death certificate for them and their programme," the paper said.

The three MPs alleged cases of corruption worth millions of dollars in institutions headed by the finance minister, and charged that Mr. Rodhan had failed to implement laws and introduce measures to protect public funds.

But Mr. Rodhan hit back in his replies, listing his actions to root out corruption related to foreign

that they don't have new blood, young people to join parliament in 2000, for the next elections," said the head of the political science department at Kuwait University.

The KDF's two MPs, Mr. Munayyees and Abdullah Al Naibari, are both veteran politicians who served in the National Assembly in the 1970s.

Mr. Naibari was shot and wounded in an assassination bid in June that

"The interpolation revealed a number of truths," according to the newspaper Al Watan.

"Perhaps the first of these truths is confirmation of the isolation of the movement which is represented by the Kuwait Democratic Forum (KDF) and its allies," the paper said of the emirate's leading liberal movement.

The KDF is one of several unofficial political groupings represented to parliament.

Sami Munayyes, one of two KDF-backed MPs, led the grilling with two other liberal deputies, Mishari Al Osaimi and Ahmad Al Mulaifi.

The failure of the KDF and its allies to win investments and explaining delays in implementing laws as procedural matters.

"The answers by the minister were not convincing to me," Mr. Munayyes said in his closing remarks Tuesday. But he could not win the backing from the floor of the house.

The sitting ended when 31 of the 52 MPs present voted with the government to close the debate.

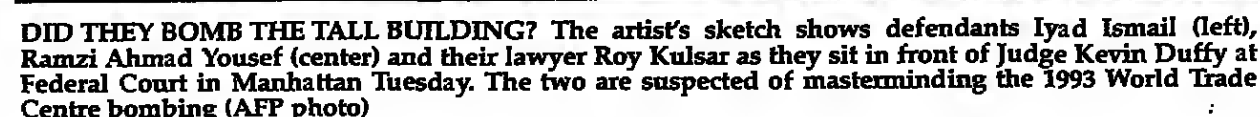
"The liberal movement actually lost ground many years ago," said political scientist Ahmad Al Baghdadi, adding that the liberal "old guard" in parliament have failed to win over young supporters.

"Their deadly mistake is

analysis said boosted the liberal-led campaign against public corruption. But this support did not carry over into their bid to oust the finance minister.

The number of liberal deputies was slashed by about half in the October 1996 elections, from nine in the last parliament.

In the elections, pro-government MPs became the dominant bloc in the National Assembly, which has 50 elected seats plus unelected cabinet members. But Islamists maintain a strong voice. Formal political parties are banned in Kuwait, blurring the policy lines.



Egyptian on trial for Sadat's assassination 15 years back

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Sudanese and Egyptian parliaments are trying to mend the rift between the two countries, Sudanese Deputy Parliamentary Speaker Abdul Aziz Shiddo was quoted Wednesday as saying.

Mr. Shiddo, quoted by Alwan newspaper, said efforts by the two parlia-

after he was sentenced in absentia for being the member of the group that assassinated President Anwar Sadat.

Hussein Ahmad Hussein had been on the run since the Oct. 6, 1981, assassination. After the attack, a court had convicted him of being a member of the Jihad group that killed Sadat because of his peace initiative with Israel and sentenced him in

given no details about his apprehension.

Egyptian law requires that people convicted in absentia be retried.

Five men were executed and more than 100 received prison terms up to life for the assassination.

The Jihad group has been largely crushed since the assassination, but other Islamist groups are active.

Egypt was the first Arab

anger, ousting Egypt from the Arab League and breaking relations.

Sadat came in for strong criticism from groups with in Egypt opposed to peace with Israel.

Egypt is now a key mediator in negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Jordan in 1994 became the second Arab state to sign a peace treaty with Israel.

Barak leaves Cairo with detained businesswoman

CAIRO (AP) — A suspected Islamist went on trial Tuesday, more than 15 years after he was sentenced in absentia for being the member of the group that assassinated President Anwar Sadat.

Hussein Ahmad Hussein had been on the run since the Oct. 6, 1981, assassination. After the attack, a court had convicted him of being a member of the Jihad group that killed Sadat because of his peace initiative with Israel and sentenced him to three years in jail.

Police said Hussein was arrested in June but have given no details about his apprehension.

Egyptian law requires that people convicted in absentia be retried.

Five men were executed and more than 100 received prison terms up to life for the assassination.

The Jihad group has been largely crushed since the assassination, but other Islamist groups are active.

Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Arab countries reacted in anger, ousting Egypt from the Arab League and breaking relations.

Sadat came in for strong criticism from groups with in Egypt opposed to peace with Israel.

Egypt is now a key mediator in negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Jordan in 1994 became the second Arab state to sign a peace treaty with Israel.

Barak leaves Cairo with detained businesswoman

CAIRO (AFP) — Israeli Labour Party leader Ehud Barak left here Wednesday in his private jet with an Israeli businesswoman who had been arrested by the Egyptian authorities.

Dvora Ganani featured on a black list of people banned from entering Egypt for security reasons, was picked up at Cairo airport late Tuesday, Egyptian security sources said.

Mr. Barak, the leader of Israel's main opposition party, delayed his departure from a two-day official visit to Egypt by 90 minutes so that he could take Ms. Ganani with him, the sources said.

She was due to be deported later Wednesday on a flight of the Israeli national carrier El Al.

Israeli Foreign Minister Amr Musa told Agency France Press he knew nothing about the case, but that he was sure there was a reason why Ms. Ganani had been held.

"Sorry, but this is the first time I hear about this. But let me assure you that there must be a reason for that ... I do not think that the accusations here in Egypt are just framed like that," he told AFP.

Israel's charge d'affaires in Cairo, Yassov Brosh, said Ms. Ganani had not been arrested. "Her visa was refused, which is totally different."

He said Ms. Ganani had been living in Egypt for four years and that she was returning from a holiday in Egypt when she was stopped from entering.

Ms. Ganani herself told Israel Radio by telephone. "I have been held since my arrival Tuesday by the Egyptian security services,

but they questioned me only about my business."

"They took my passport and since then, I have been locked up," she said, adding that she was being treated well.

Her son said that Ms. Ganani heads an import-export company specialising in cosmetics and lives mainly in Cairo.

She has recently been the target of a press campaign in Egypt where a book has been published denouncing her as a dangerous spy.

The Egyptian ambassador to Israel, Mohammed Bassiouni, told Israel Radio in Tel Aviv that Ms. Ganani's detention could have been a computer mistake.

"A lot of [Israeli] business people go there and everything is clear and everything is kosher," Mr. Bassiouni said. "Maybe it is a misunderstanding, I don't know."

Police chief arrested for bugging Turkish generals

ANKARA (AFP) — A former police intelligence chief was arrested Wednesday for bugging powerful Turkish generals accused by the government's intelligence service has performed its duty by collecting the information and conveying it to the government.

mer Islamist-led government of plotting a coup, the Anatolian news agency said.

Bulent Orakoglu, an official close to Islamist former Premier Necmettin Erbakan's government, was arrested and sent to an army prison after several hours of interrogation by a military prosecutor.

The Anatolian said Mr. Orakoglu would be tried by a military court on charges of "illegally obtaining secret information and documents related to the state's security."

He faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Meral Aksener, interior minister in Mr. Erbakan's cabinet, last week accused "an illegally formed group in the armed forces" of planning a coup, saying the plot had been foiled by Mr. Orakoglu's department.

Mr. Aksener confirmed that the police had tapped the telephones of the Turkish general staff, saying, "the security

"The Prime Minister [Erbakan] then talked to the President [Suleyman Demirel] about the situation, who in turn gave the information to the chief of the general staff," Mr. Aksener told reporters last Tuesday.

Mr. Aksener is a close aide to conservative leader Tansu Ciller. Mr. Erbakan's former partner in government and his main political ally.

The Turkish military flatly denied Mr. Aksener's charges and said it would sue the ex-interior minister for "spying on the military and insulting the generals with unfounded claims."

Following months of escalating tension with the secularist army over creeping Islamisation in Turkey, Mr. Erbakan stepped down as prime minister, June 18 and was replaced by conservative Mesut Yilmaz, who formed a secular coalition government.

Mr. Yilmaz won a crucial

Mr. Erbakan and Ms. Ciller have been accusing the army of engineering their government's fall and exerting pressure on deputies to switch sides.

In another development, the army has accused Mr. Erbakan's Islamist Welfare Party of receiving millions of dollars in illegal aid from four Islamist states, a newspaper reported Wednesday.

Welfare received the money in several instalments from Iran, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for use before Turkey's general elections in 1987 and 1991, the mass-circulation Istanbul daily Sabah quoted a military intelligence report as saying. Last week the military submitted evidence to the constitutional court "linking Welfare with outlawed Islamic activities," as part of its legal move to have Welfare shut down.

NEW YORK (R) — Entertainer Bill Cosby testified in court that he had once with the mother of a woman who claims to be his daughter and who is on trial for attempting to extort \$2 million from him. Cosby previously admitted to having an affair with Sherry Thompson, mother of 2-year-old Autumn Jackson, but he has steadfastly denied being the father of Jackson. She is one of 300 students whose education Cosby said he helped pay for through a foundation he established with Camille Cosby, his wife of 33 years. The television star, comedian and author testified at Manhattan Federal Court that he met Jackson at least twice and spoken with her on the telephone several times over the years, at one time telling her: "Look Autumn, I'm not your father. I will be for you a father figure. I am open 24 hours a day. Let me know what you need." Cosby said his contact with her was no more nor less than with other students he associated.

BERLIN (AFP) — Berlin will stage Europe's first camel races August 17 at the city's Hippodrome, organisers said. Up to 40,000 spectators are expected for the five races, sponsored by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is loaning camels. Unlike in the Gulf, the beasts will be racing grass and not sand, but trainer Obaid Ali Mansour, who has also been coaching the German jockeys, said was not worried. The races will be broadcast live to the UAE.

NEW YORK (R) — An honest New York taxi driver returned almost \$33,000 in life savings to an elderly woman who left the money in the back of his cab, police officials said. They praised the driver, Yurbe Tirmizi, for returning a reward from the 70-year-old part-time musician who had been carrying her money around in a leather bag because she feared being robbed by a neighbor. She said she found her bank account "inconvenient." The woman, who was not identified on the recommendation of police, said that when she discovered the money was missing after the taxi ride on Saturday night, she thought: "I don't have a nickel to my name and don't know what I'll do." Then the police called, saying that her \$32,859.05 in large and small bills and coins had been returned by Tirmizi, a 20-year-old geological student and part-time taxi driver.

LONDON (R) — A buchee-turned-sculptor with connections to Britain's royal family has been charged with stealing human body parts and using them in his art, police said. Anthony Noel Kelly, a cousin of the Duke of Norfolk and a part-time teacher at Prince Charles's Institute of Architecture, and another man who was a former employee of the Royal College of Surgeons, were charged with theft. "They are due to appear in court on August 15 charged with the theft of various anatomical parts belonging to the Royal College of Surgeons between June 1991 and November 1994," a police spokesman told Reuters. Kelly, 41, was arrested in April after police discovered 30 human body parts in raids on his London studio and country home.

Israel soldiers protect settler
RETURNED JERUSALEM (AP) — An armed Jewish settler in the Golan Heights was protected by Israeli soldiers as he moved to his home Friday night after a day of fighting in the south. The settler, who was not named, was seen in a military jeep with soldiers. The settler was seen in a military jeep with soldiers. The settler was seen in a military jeep with soldiers.

January 22 Number 6586

Netanyahu
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Combined agency
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March.

"We are now the only newspaper," Mr. C. said, "published during a week of the month of Ramadan. It is French progress."

Mr. C. began in Beirut and Wadwa. He then moved to Lebanon and Palestine. He then moved to Yasser Arafat in the French mandate of the mandate.

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مع شيفتك نختار ما يطيب لها من أكلات الأطعمة المعروفة على خمس كاونترات ذات الخدمة الذاتية في الطابق الأرضي ومنع جلسة خارجية مميزة

قاعة الخدمة المتكاملة المميزة

قاعة أنيقة بخدمة متكاملة في الطابق العلوي حيث تصح لنا المجال لخدمتكم وتقديم تشكيلة واسعة من الحلويات المتوفرة في مطاعمنا الخمس

DUNKIN' DONUTS

GRETEL'S PRETZELS

الشركة الكندية العالمية للمطاعم السياحية - دوار عبدون
THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL TOURISTIC RESTAURANTS
ABDOON CIRCLE